LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS FOR ST. CHARLES, ST. JAMES, AND ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISHES

Prepared for:

THE RIVER REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

July 2008

Prepared by:

Wadley-Donovan GrowthTech LLC

505 Morris Avenue, Suite 102
Springfield, NJ 07081
www.wdgtech.com
973.379.7700

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

This Labor Market Analysis report is the product of a contract between Wadley-Donovan GrowthTech (WDG) and the Port of South Louisiana acting as coordinator for The River Region Economic Development Initiative (RREDI), a coordinated program of St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist Parishes. This study uses information obtained through: surveys of labor-related issues among employers and households in the three-parish region; telephone interviews with firms that provide miscellaneous contract services to the largest company facilities in the region; and a review of key statistical and other secondary-source information. The employer survey gathered information from area employers concerning the availability, quality, and cost of labor; the quality and utilization of educational institutions and training resources; and the future demand for workers. The household survey results allowed us to quantify and profile the region's regular labor force and its hidden labor resources. The household survey was produced for WDG by Younger Associates (YA), based in Jackson, TN, which specializes in business-to-business and business-to-consumer surveys. Our comprehensive assessment includes coverage of the three main issues of the River Region Economic Development Initiative (workforce analysis, workforce trends within RREDI's targeted Industries, and a profile of the under-employed).

WDG's Labor Market Analysis for the River Parishes was done in conjunction with a separate analysis conducted by Workforce Alliance, a human resources consulting firm and a licensed employment agency based in St. Rose, Louisiana. Workforce Alliance's assessment provided a comprehensive profile of the active applicant base currently seeking employment in the industrial sector in the River Region. Workforce Alliance's assessment provides a snapshot of qualifications of the available workforce for employment in the industrial sector within the River Parishes. The data used in their analysis was compiled using general labor statistics, validated assessment tools, and focus-group sessions with large industry employers, middle market entities, and public organizations. Twenty-seven employers participated in these focus groups. The sample data used by Workforce Alliance was provided directly by 11,470 motivated job seekers within the firm's database. Their report has been submitted separately, but findings from their assessment are included in this report.

This Labor Market Analysis serves as a foundation and tool for improving the region's economy and overall economic development. Labor is the number-one factor in company decisions on where they locate their facilities. Real estate, utilities, infrastructure, market access, transportation, operating costs, and other factors are very important considerations in corporate location decisions. However, labor-force factors are most frequently the deciding consideration on where a facility will locate. Therefore, it is very important for economic development agencies to have the most thorough and detailed information possible of their workforce. This assessment meets this need. It will allow the parishes and the Port to:

- Meet the varied data requests of site selectors, which frequently have to be provided within hours of receipt.
- Respond quickly to data requests of existing employers on salaries, labor availability, training programs, and other topics.
- Understand the strengths, weaknesses, and other dynamics of their labor market to insure its ongoing ability to respond to emerging marketplace changes and global economic shifts.
- Assure that the local workforce is meeting existing employer needs and will be ready for anticipated future needs.
- Provide data for marketing efforts, including interactive or static websites.
- Serve as a foundation to economic development strategic plans.

- Serve as a direction for target-industry identification.
- Institute remedial programs to strengthen or remove weaknesses within the workforce so that workforce flexibility and wealth creation can be maximized, and to strengthen the area's economy.
- Assist the River Parishes Workforce Investment Board (WIB) in its work and data needs.
- Assist high schools and post-secondary educational institutions to design programs needed by area employers and to satisfy their emerging training needs.
- Distinguish the region from its competitors.

This report provides the foundation needed for each of the above goals through a comprehensive labor assessment and characteristics of the four basic sectors of the region's workforce:

1. **Workers that are not under-employed:** This is the bulk of any area's workforce and the single largest base from which any new or expanding employer in a community will draw its employees. This segment includes the region's workers who are employed at or above the level dictated by their training or education. Residents within this sector would be accessible to new and expanding employers for a variety of reasons, including the desire for a better working environment (e.g., improved HR practices, newer facilities, better training), the chance for better working hours, a shorter commute, improved career-laddering or promotion opportunities, higher wages, and improved benefits. This sector can comprise up to 85% of an area's effective workforce.
2. **The under-employed:** This sector of the workforce consists of those employed residents who are qualified for better positions than they currently hold because of experience, training, or education, and would like to move into a position for which they are more qualified. It does not include under-paid or under-trained employees, who are part of the previously defined sector. The under-employed represent 13% of the River Region's employed residents.
3. **Residents that are not employed, but want to work:** This sector includes unemployed residents that are seeking work and receiving unemployment benefits, and residents who are not working because they are retired, going to school, raising a family, can't find a job that matches their abilities or goals, have difficulties finding work because of transportation or child/adult care issues, or other reasons. Non-working spouses are included in this group.
4. **The emergent or potential workforce:** This sector consists of high school graduates, two- and four-year college graduates, residents moving into the area, and residents who commute to jobs outside the region of study.

This labor analysis identifies the availability, quality, cost, and trainability of the three-parish workforce using quantified data coming from secondary and primary sources. The findings presented herein are those of WDG only. We have examined the region from a corporate perspective and our own knowledge of labor markets across the U.S.

This authorized study required independent research to review the River Parishes' labor resources and basic operating environment from the perspective of a locationally active company. For this study, WDG:

- Prepared maps depicting the geographic concentration of key demographic variables in 45- and 60-minute commute zones centered around three separate employment centers in the region. These maps are presented in Appendix A. The three employment nodes are located at:

  - St. Charles Parish: Intersection of I-310 and River Road (SR 18), Luling, LA
  - St. James Parish: 8800 SR 44, Convent, LA
  - St. John the Baptist Parish: Intersection of East Jefferson Highway (SR 44) and Central Avenue (SR 53), Reserve, LA
- Surveyed employers across the three parishes with 20 or more employees:
  - WDG distributed 241 surveys to employers in key business sectors in the three parishes in March 2008. The mailing list was developed through InfoUSA, a private vendor, and modified with local input. Forty surveys were returned, for a 16.6% response rate. The rate of return exceeded our goal of 15%, and it yielded a representative sample that allowed WDG to provide observations on the condition of the region's labor market based on employer experiences. A summary of this survey is presented in Appendix B, and a summary of the survey responses from employers within region's targeted industries is presented in Appendix E.
- Conducted telephone interviews with nine representative firms that provide contract services to area companies with large facilities in the River Parishes, such as Monsanto, Shell Chemical, Motiva, Marathon, Dow Chemical, Valero, Conoco, and Entergy in the St. Charles and St. John Parishes. These contractors provide a range of services including industrial maintenance, construction, civil engineering, electrical and instrumentation maintenance, HVAC, fugitive emissions monitoring, industrial painting, and equipment rental.
- Surveyed, in the spring of 2008, a random, stratified sample of residents ranging in age from 18 to 74 years to gather information on employment status, training needs, and income and education levels. A total of 662 surveys were conducted. The surveys included a statistically valid, stratified sample of residents in the region. To achieve the required response rate for statistical validity and to assure a properly statistically stratified sample of all socio-economic and demographic segments of the population, YA conducted the survey using face-to-face interviews at popular retail centers in the region. The survey results have a +/- 5% margin of error and a reliability of 95%. The household survey findings are presented in Appendix C.
- Prepared and reviewed statistical data on key workforce factors for each of the three commute zones, the three parishes, the region, Louisiana, and the United States. Research sources include, but are not limited to: the State of Louisiana, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the U.S. Departments of Education and Commerce. TETRAD, Inc. (a leading demographic data vendor of Claritas data) was used for 2007 and 2012 demographic, occupational, and related data estimates and projections. Exhibits containing the gathered data are presented in Appendix D.
- Determined the region's forecasted workforce trends and the current workforce demand of RREDI's primary targeted industries (Administrative and Back Offices, Commercial and Industrial Machinery Repair and Maintenance, Other Chemical Product Manufacturing, Metal Tank Manufacturing, Pump and Compressor Manufacturing, Navigational, Measurement, Electronic, and Control Instrument Manufacturing, Other Transportation Equipment Manufacturing). The projected jobs in these industries are included in Appendix F.
- Incorporated findings from Workforce Alliance's research.

A study of this nature can do no more than describe local conditions. The actual impact of these conditions for any given organizational activity will vary, reflecting the different characteristics and structure of each organization. WDG's principal findings and conclusions are recapped in the Executive Summary, followed by a presentation of our findings on key labor-market factors, business climate and operating environment, and quality of life.

WDG is the nation's oldest independent management consulting firm that specializes in location consulting and economic development. Its corporate clients include many of the world's leading companies. WDG's economic development practice provides expertise to workforce and economic development agencies and utilities in sales and marketing, strategic planning, database development, overall product development, and assessment. Clients have included the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce, the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, Albuquerque; Memphis Regional Economic Development Council; the Huntsville-Madison County Chamber of Commerce; Knoxville Chamber Partnership; El Paso; Elko, NV; Great Falls; Phoenix; Sheridan, WY; Conway, AR; Tallahassee; Tunica County, MS; Collier County, FL; Lee County, FL; and the states of Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, New Jersey, Oregon, Wyoming, Wisconsin, and Maryland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of Findings

The River Region consists of St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist Parishes. These three parishes are all located on the Mississippi River. The center of the region is approximately 30 miles west of New Orleans. Interstate access is provided by I-10, I-55, and I-310, giving the region excellent east/west and north/south highway access. Commercial passenger and airfreight air service is available through nearby New Orleans Louis Armstrong International Airport and Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport. This access, coupled with its location in metropolitan New Orleans, proximity to metro Baton Rouge, direct access to the Mississippi River (including the Port of South Louisiana), rail service, and location within the oil- and natural-gas-rich Gulf Coast, gives the region the foundation for a vibrant economic base.

Manufacturing is the largest business sector in the region, accounting for 18.1% of the region's jobs, followed by *logistics and distribution* (11.7%), *retail trade* (11.3%), and *construction* (9.7%). These three sectors also had the greatest numeric job growth since 2000. Even with this growth in the region's largest business sectors, the region is seeing expanding economic diversification. The greatest job growth between 2000 and 2007 was in two key, knowledge-based, white-collar sectors: *information* (26%) and *professional/scientific/technical services* (25.3%). Significantly, employment in all business sectors expanded substantially since 2000. Employment growth during this period exceeded the national rates in each of these sectors.

The region contains several employers with 500 to 1,000 employees, including many petrochemical and food-processing operations. The largest employers in the region are Dow St. Charles, Motiva, Monsanto, Valero St. Charles, Entergy Operations Inc. (Waterford 3), Shell Chemical, A.M.E. Services Inc., Valero Refining New Orleans, and Marathon Petroleum Company, LLC. In addition to these employers, the region has a large base of small and mid-sized employers.

Although most surveyed employers expect to maintain a stable employment pattern over the next year, WDG's employer survey indicates that there will be an employment gain of 5.2%, or an increase of 3,000 positions across the region. Workforce Alliance data shows that the *petrochemical* sub-sector will remain stable in its employment, but *industrial contractor* growth will see a slight up-tick in jobs. The Louisiana Department of Labor forecasts no net growth in regional employment in RREDI's targeted sectors between 2004 and 2014, with employment demand for job replacements only.

The occupations in greatest current demand are engineering technician, production operators, unskilled laborers, multi-skilled industrial maintenance mechanics, and engineers. In one year there will be a demand for a variety of occupations, with the greatest demand anticipated for production operators, engineering technicians, unskilled manufacturing laborers, machinery maintenance mechanics (including multi skilled industrial), engineers, truck drivers, and electrical and electronic repairers. The demand in three years will follow this same pattern. Engineers and production operators will be in the occupations in greatest demand among the targeted industries.

The River Region offers numerous assets for a new or expanding employer. These include:

- **The region had an estimated population of 128,488 in 2007.** St. Charles Parish is the region's largest parish, with almost 55,000 residents, followed by St. John with 51,100 residents, and St. James with a population of slightly more than 22,000.

- **Population growth has exceeded state and national averages since 2000 (14.4% versus 7.0%).** St. John has seen the strongest growth, with a gain of 18.8%, followed by St. Charles (14.3%) and St. James Parishes (5.6%). The national growth rate during this seven-year period was 7.0%, while the state lost 3.1%, due in part to adverse impacts of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.
- **The labor force increased by 9.3% between 2000 and 2007.**
- **The unemployment rate is roughly equal to the national average.** The region's annual average unemployment rate stood at 4.2% in 2007, higher than the Louisiana average (3.8%), but lower than the national average (4.6%). The unemployment rate was 6.1% in 2000.
- **Employers report that more people are now available for hiring.** The direct and indirect impacts of Hurricane Katrina on the region's workforce are subsiding. People who evacuated are moving back to the area, and FEMA disaster-recovery employment is down, driving more people into the workforce.
- **Workforce Alliance shows that 99% of the jobseekers in its database have a high school diploma or GED, and 73% have some post-secondary education, mostly in technical-related fields.** Louisiana Technical College is the most frequently used school by WA's job applicants.
- **The effective labor shed of area employers is larger than WDG has seen in other areas of the country.** Employer-based data shows effective labor sheds of 45 to 60 minutes, compared to 30 minutes seen in most other locations. The difference is due to the higher salaries paid by many of the region's employers, and to the proximity of the region to large population centers in neighboring parishes within metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge.
- **Within the 45- to 60-minute commutes zones of the St. Charles and St. John locations studied in this report, there is a population range of 937,000 to 1,400,000.** This translates into an effective labor force of 461,000 to 622,000. St. James' 45- and 60-minute labor sheds have a workforce of 200,000 and 600,000. Some of this labor shed extends into growing Ascension Parish, which is part of the Baton Rouge metro area. This parish is attracting much of the Baton Rouge area growth because of its good public school systems.
- **Labor-force participation is slightly below average in the region (62.3% versus 64.1% nationally). This statistically indicates a modest potential supply of additional workers that could be expected to enter and actively participate in the local workforce.** Labor-participation rates for the six commute zones are also low, and all but one of the zones are lower than the national rate.
- **Household incomes in the region are higher than the Louisiana average and approximate the national average.** In 2007, the median household income in the region ($48,830) is about 21% higher than the Louisiana average ($40,371) and about 1% lower than the national average ($49,314).
- **The region has a hidden workforce, consisting of the under-employed, not-employed who want to work, and out-commuters.** WDG/YA's household survey shows that there are 14,133 residents within the region that fall into these categories (9,037 who are not employed but want to work, and 5,096 under-employed). Added to this number are the region's 11,000 residents who work outside the region and the 147 graduates of the River Parishes campus of Louisiana Technical College and the River Parishes Community College. In addition to these graduates, a River Parishes employer has access to the graduates of the LSU in

Baton Rouge, and the graduates of the New Orleans universities (e.g., University of New Orleans, Xavier, Loyola, and Tulane). The skill sets of the not-employed are largely in construction occupations, followed by cleaning and maintenance, and office/administrative. The skills of the under-employed are within technical, healthcare, construction, and office/administrative occupations. The under-employed tend to be over the age of 35 and hold high school diplomas with some post-secondary education. The not-employed span all age groups and have high school diplomas as their highest level of education.

- **Most residents of the region work within the region, and a significant portion of the region's workforce commutes into the area from neighboring or nearby parishes**. The WDG household survey results show that 71.6% of the region's residents work in the region (St. Charles 32.8%, St. John 26.5%, and St. James 13.2%). Only 28.4% of the area's residents work outside the region (almost 11,000 residents), mostly in Jefferson Parish (15.5% or almost 6,200 of the region's employed residents). Residents from outside the region who commute to jobs within the region more than balance this loss of residents to jobs outside the region. Jefferson Parish and Lafourche Parish are the leading sources of this in-bound labor force. Data from representative area companies shows that 63% of their labor force comes from within the region, which translates into an estimated 21,000 job holders commuting into the region.
- **Workforce Alliance data shows that the job-applicant base is moving westward.** WA's database shows that Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, and Lafourche Parishes are supplying an increasing number of job applicants.
- **The region has a slightly younger workforce than the state and nation.** The median age for the three counties in 2007 is 35.1 years, compared to 35.4 years in Louisiana, and 36.6 years in the U.S. This profile can be an advantage, as some companies prefer to locate operations in areas with a median age that approximates or is below the national norm for optimum access to younger talent.
- **Household incomes in the region are higher than Louisiana but lower than the national averages.** In 2007, the median household income in the region ($48,830) is about 21% higher than the Louisiana average ($40,371) and about 1% lower than the national average ($49,314).
- **The region has a strong relative base of working residents in ten occupational groups.** The employment ratio by occupation matches or exceeds national averages in ten occupational groups, including Architecture/engineering, construction/extraction, installation/maintenance/repair, the sciences, office and administrative support, production, and transportation/logistics. The five most dominant occupations, meanwhile, are office/administrative support, production, sales-related, construction/extraction, and transportation/material-moving.
- **The region can support a large new office employer.** One or more competitively paying office operations could potentially hire up to 1,173 qualified and screened workers during the first year of operation, depending on their facilities' locations in the region.
- **The region can support a large new manufacturing or distribution operation.** One or more competitively paying manufacturing/distribution operations with a standard occupational profile requirement could potentially hire up to 1,161 qualified and screened workers, depending on their facilities' locations in the region.
- **Some occupations can be easily recruited in the region.** All of the business and financial occupations, and most computer/mathematical occupations included in WDG's employer survey for which sufficient returns were received, can be recruited at satisfactory to good levels, as can general technicians.

- **Employers report satisfactory to good work ethic and productivity among their employees**. Meanwhile, employee turnover and absenteeism are low and at parity with those seen by WDG in similar sized communities. Employers within the targeted industries report a higher productivity and work ethic than other employers do. Workforce Alliance data shows that the average time employees have been at their current job is four years.
- **Responding employers report that they frequently work with the local campus of Louisiana Technical College (LTC) in Reserve for training programs, apprenticeships, co-ops, and other programs.** Currently, 43% of companies responding to WDG's survey are using co-ops, apprenticeships, internships, or similar programs, which is much higher than what WDG sees in most of the areas it has studied. Interviewed employers and contractors noted that LTC's programs and instruction have improved in recent years. LTC and River Parishes Community College both received good to very good ratings by surveyed employers. Other training programs, including specialty crafts, are available from the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and from unions.
- **Interviewed contractors rate the applicability of Louisiana Technical College's curricula and skills of its graduates as satisfactory.** Interviewed companies noted that the Reserve campus of LTC has improved in recent years in program offerings and program quality. Many of the interviewed contractors use the Technical College/Association of Builders & Contractors construction trades training programs for both pre- and post-employment training.
- **Employers in Workforce Alliance's focus groups indicated they are responding to challenges of workforce demographics and availability issues** by working collaboratively on major initiatives; broadening the definition of the traditional labor profile; creating job-sharing opportunities; and altering schedules to accommodate part-time and/or seasonal work.
- **Local residents would like to see additional training programs to upgrade their skills**. 45.8% of residents in the region who are currently employed (approximately 17,900 individuals) and 78.1% of those not currently employed but interested in employment (roughly 7,000 individuals) are interested in receiving training/education to acquire new job skills. The largest number of residents report a desire for *computer-general* training.
- **Surveyed employers report a satisfactory to good quality of life in the region**. Employers within the targeted industry sectors, however, gave somewhat lower ratings than other employers did.
- **Many employers consider the public school systems in St. Charles Parish to be good—and better than other systems within the greater New Orleans area.**
- **The labor/management environment in the region is employer-friendly.** There have been no union elections in the region since August 2004, and there were only 22 certification elections held between 1990 and 2007.

The River Region has some labor-force-related challenges that adversely affect the region's ability to provide the workforce necessary to support the expansion of existing employers and the attraction of new industries. The principal challenges include:

- **After a significant period of population growth, Claritas forecasts a significant slowing of gains over the next five years**. There is a forecasted population decline in St. James Parish.
- **The River Region offers a modestly educated adult population.** The educational levels in which the region exceeds the national norm is in "no high school diploma" and "high school diploma only", but trails the U.S. average in the percent of residents with post-high-school education.

- **Workforce Alliance data shows that the percentage of job applicants scoring at or above the national skill standard for entry-level industrial positions in Work Keys assessments has declined.** In 2003, 87% scored at or above the national skills standard, while only 78% scored at this level in 2008.
- **The profile of the median household income distribution shows a bi-modal, middle/upper middle- and lower/middle-income pattern.** The percentage of households earning less than $15,000 exceeds the national average. St. John and St. James Parishes contribute to this spike. Meanwhile the percentage of households with incomes between $50,000 and $149,000 exceeds the national average.
- **The region's employment ratios lag behind the nation in several knowledge-based occupational groups**. These include arts/design/entertainment/sports/media, computer and mathematical, financial specialists, healthcare practitioner/technician, legal, and management.
- **The region's labor market is very tight.** Employers report tight or unavailable recruiting conditions for 64% of the occupations for which sufficient data was received. Healthcare (practitioners and technical), engineering, instillation/maintenance/repair, and production occupations are in the shortest supply. Employers within the targeted sectors report difficulty recruiting chemical engineers, process technology technicians, welders, millwrights, instrumentation technicians, and multi-craft industrial mechanics.
- **Employers express some difficulty recruiting managers and professional talent from outside the area.** Employers report below-average employment opportunities for "trailing" spouses and the cost of housing and homeowner's insurance as major obstacles in recruiting personnel from outside the region. Another contributing factor is a concern about the quality of public schools. Employers report that competitor locations such as Houston offer more appealing quality-of-life opportunities to technical, professional, and managerial recruits.
- **Impending Baby-Boomer retirement is an issue in the region.** Data from WDG's employer survey indicates that, on average, 12.9% of currently employed workers are presently eligible for retirement or will become eligible for retirement over the next five years. This equates to approximately 7,428 employees eligible to retire over the next five years, based on the region's employment of 57,578 workers (2007 annual average). Employers are not confident or are unsure they will be able to fill retirement vacancies in 37% of the positions held by employees eligible to retire now or over the next five years. Among the reported occupations are administrative, accounting, installation (maintenance & repair), mechanics, production operators, and managers. Contractors and employers within the targeted industries have a higher concern about retirements than do the other region employers. Some employers in these sectors report 40% of their employees will be retirement-eligible within the next four to five years, although the average is 22%.

  Workforce Alliance's research shows that it is unlikely that the retiring workforce will provide a high rate of re-entry into the labor shed, even though employers are motivated to retain these employees in the workforce and are offering them incentives to stay employed. WDG's household survey shows that 42% of residents expect to continue working after retirement, but mostly in part-time positions. Only 40% indicated they would want to work in the same field in which they are currently employed.
- **Workforce Alliance data shows that Boomer retirements have begun, leading to higher employee turnover.** Employers are using this period of higher turnover as an opportunity to retool the desired competency mix of their workforce. The desired skill mix is shifting toward a higher value of relational skills versus strictly technical skills.

- **Comparing the current demand for workers against the current availability ratings indicates there are existing critical labor shortages for some occupations.** These include teachers (secondary), electrical and electronic repairers, industrial machinery mechanics, maintenance workers (machinery), and unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair). For these occupations, demand significantly exceeds availability. Also indicated is a **general imbalance** between labor demand and supply for engineers, mechanical engineers, engineering technicians (general), construction laborers, electricians, registered nurses, assemblers/fabricators, welders, and truck drivers (heavy, tractor trailer). For these occupations, demand exceeds availability. Additionally, there is a **modest imbalance** for the following occupations: electrical and electronic engineers, industrial engineers, computer software engineers, teachers (elementary), and customer service representatives. For these occupations, demand slightly exceeds availability.
- **Comparing the twelve-month demand for workers against the current employer-reported workforce availability ratings indicates there will be critical labor shortages for some of the same occupations, plus others.** These include engineers, electrical and electronic repairers, industrial machinery mechanics, maintenance workers (machinery), unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair), and truck drivers (heavy, tractor-trailer). There also will be a **general imbalance** between labor demand and supply for industrial engineers, mechanical engineers, engineering technicians (general), construction laborers, electricians, and registered nurses. Meanwhile, there will be a **modest imbalance** for a variety of occupations, including electrical and electronic engineers, teachers (elementary, secondary, special education, and post-secondary), industrial production managers, assemblers/fabricators, computer-controlled-machine-tool operators (metal), instrumentation technicians, and production operators.
- **Contractors report minimal hiring from the local River Parishes labor market due to limited availability of employment candidates.** Interviewed contractors said they routinely recruit from the Baton Rouge labor market and from out-of-state. Current rating of the overall availability of employment candidates in the River Parishes is fair. Skilled trades—such as combination welders, pipefitters, heavy-equipment operators, and HVAC—are among the most difficult to recruit in the River Parishes labor market.
- **Interviewed contractors forecast that labor availability will not improve over the next three to five years and beyond.** Companies interviewed by Ratings All indicated they anticipate shortages across all skill sets and occupations due to an aging work force and growing labor demand fueled by new construction that is projected to continue through 2012.
- **There is a concern among employers that their effective labor shed will be reduced as a result of increasing gas prices.**
- **Workforce Alliance and WDG see a significant gap between educational/training attainment and workplace readiness.** An additional gap exists between the career expectations fostered by area technical schools and the realities of the actual job opportunities.
- **Significant work has been done in *Process Technology* training, according to WA's research.** However, these training programs need to be expanded to a broader cross-section of the workforce. Workforce Alliance's focus groups show that a concern exists among employers that resources are almost solely focused on large industry needs at the exclusion of small and middle-market businesses
- **Interviewees voiced the need for more skilled crafts curricula, and an improved and expanded multi-skilled industrial mechanic program in the region.** LTC would provide the multi-skilled industrial mechanic program, while LTC, ABC, and the unions would be the providers of the skilled-crafts curricula.

- **The need to improve the quality of the instructors at LTC was cited by interviewed contractors, as some instructors are considered out of touch with current technologies; in some cases because they are retired and receive minimal pay.** Interviewees indicated that some instructors are hired by the day, are poorly prepared, and depend too heavily on instructional tapes for their teaching. It also was felt that graduates often lack needed hands-on experience.
- **Until recently, area employers of chemical, industrial, electrical, and other engineers have been raiding each other for candidates.** This is continuing to a lesser degree, and the area's employers have recognized the value of encouraging more area high school and middle school students to enter engineering programs.
- **Interviewed contractors see a need to increase funding of training programs in the region and state.** Interviewees frequently noted a need to concentrate efforts in the high schools to change the mind-set of high school students in favor of pursing a career in the technical trades.
- **Of the six public high schools in the three-parish region for which No Child Left Behind (NCLB) performance designations were provided, only two have attained growth targets.**
- **Average annual employee earnings in the River Region are higher than both the Louisiana and U.S. averages.** The region's overall 2005 average earnings per year per worker ($45,055) [latest data available] were nearly 44% higher than the Louisiana average ($31,318), and 17% higher than the national average ($38,539). This high average salary is driven by the region's numerous petrochemical plants and other large manufacturing operations. Employers not within these sectors report lower salaries.

Conclusions

The River Region is blessed with a strong economy supported by well-paying petrochemical jobs, a growing population in its region and within its labor shed, a very good transportation system and access to markets, a location in an economically vibrant and pro-business state, and a good local and regional educational infrastructure that offers workforce-training opportunities for residents and businesses. Meanwhile, its workforce is productive and loyal with a good work ethic; household incomes are among the highest in the state and approximate the national average; the region has a large, effective, labor shed that extends into the Baton Rouge and New Orleans metro areas; and there is a significant hidden workforce consisting of out-commuting residents, graduates of colleges and universities in the region and within the neighboring metro areas, and the under-employed. The region can support additional employment demands for new and existing companies paying above median wages, and the region's labor force would like to receive training for job and career upgrades. While the region's economy is heavily skewed to manufacturing, it is diversifying through growing employment within the knowledge-based service sectors.

However, these advantages are counterbalanced by a significant workforce shortage that will be compounded in the near and long-term future by impeding high retirements within the most skilled segments of the workforce—those within the skilled trades and technical occupations serving the petrochemical sector. This situation will restrict the region's future economic growth unless it is resolved. The shortage exists in most occupations. Only clerical and administrative, computer/mathematical and financial/business jobs can be filled at satisfactory or better levels. Importantly, the tightening labor market will adversely affect the region's industrial base, especially its industrial targets. Relief will not be available from the outer reaches of the labor shed that extend into greater Baton Rouge and New Orleans, since those area are also seeing a tightening labor market. The region's growing shortage of engineers is shared nationwide, as the number of engineering graduates is not expanding—and in some cases is contracting. Other regions of the country are now and will be in a more competitive position to attract the needed engineering students because of a lower cost of living, better public schools, more urban amenities, a better perceived quality of life, and stronger spousal-employment opportunities.

Much of the burden on resolving the growing labor shortage will lie with the local campus of Louisiana Technical College and with other educational and training entities, such as ABC and the unions, coupled with continued and stronger coordination and cooperation with employers, industry associations such as the Louisiana Chemical Association, the River Parishes Workforce Investment Board, and RREDI.

There is some potential relief to the labor shortages from the region's 9,000 parish residents who are not currently within the workforce but would like to work. However, the relief from this part of the population is limited. Only 68% would like to work full-time, many are over the age of 45, and many do not have a high school diploma, which may limit their appeal to many employers. On the positive side, most would welcome training even at their own expense and on their own time. Also—and significantly—many employed residents want access to more training, and the desired training is in line with industry needs.

Aside from attracting these not-employed residents into the workplace, efforts need to be made by employers to keep their current employees in the workplace as long as possible, even after the traditional retirement age. Such efforts would include creation by employers of a "mature-worker-friendly" operating environment, such as those suggested by AARP in its studies.

Other relief can come from concerted efforts by various private- and public-sector groups and agencies to attract younger residents into the region by developing quality-of-life factors that are attractive to a younger population, such as affordable housing in good school districts and

family- and young-singles-focused social and recreational activities. These efforts should foster an image for the region as a fun and vital place to live and work—as attractive to young, single workers and young families as it is to retirees. An important target for this effort is the estimated 21,000 employees of companies in the region that commute into the region each day. The good reputation of school systems in the region would be an important element in attracting the component of the inbound commuters with school-aged children. Meanwhile, those schools that are underperforming will need to match performance standards demanded by households seeking high quality school districts for their children. All public schools need to meet the standards required by regional businesses.

Additional relief can come as employers implement human-resource practices that will attract more job applicants of all ages, and through more training programs that can offer career-changing or -building opportunities for parish residents. These training programs will need to be structured around the needs of area employers, and designed with their strong input. Such programs could attract more job applicants, particularly among current residents who are commuting to jobs outside the region–which are about 28% of employed residents, according to the WDG household survey. These efforts could also attract more in-commuters from surrounding counties.

Workforce relief can also come from improved relationships between employers and educators. Employers—especially smaller employers—need closer relationships with the LTC and River Parishes Community College and secondary schools for training and recruiting purposes. Examples would include co-op and apprenticeship programs. More communication is needed between area employers of all sizes and area educators to allow employers a better understanding of the education resources in the area.

Workforce development needs to be an ongoing priority if the region is to sustain the growth of its existing industries and attract new and diversified industries.

Other key conclusions include:

1. LTC provides a valuable service, but there is a need for: more graduates, more skilled craft (also from ABC and the unions) and multi-craft curricula, improved teaching and teachers, and even greater employer relationships—especially among smaller employers.
2. Basic skills improvement is needed at all levels of the workforce.
3. More guidance effort is needed at the high schools and middle schools to reduce the dropout rate and to provide more focus on career guidance and preparation for the non-college bound students. Greater employer and parental participation is needed in these efforts.
4. A greater effort is needed in reaching out to the workforce and high school students to demonstrate employment opportunities in the region and the training needed, and how to apply for the available jobs. A similar effort needs to be directed to the under-employed in the area and to the residents with post-secondary education but with no career direction.
5. Better and more planning for the looming retirement wave is needed by more employers.
6. The labor shortages within the broader Gulf Coast and the nation will adversely affect the region's labor availability.
7. Ongoing diversification of the region's economy is needed.

In addition to these conclusions, Workforce Alliance offers the following conclusions from their assessment of the labor market.

1. The data demonstrates that the industrial workforce still represents a pocket of excellence.
   - Places a high value on educational attainment
   - Hourly base wages have trended moderately
   - A significant percentage of the labor shed has experience and/or training in multiple technical disciplines

2. Forces of concurrent regional hiring demands, changing demographics, technology, and shifts in the competency mix represent a significant workforce challenge.
   - Multi-generational characteristics and issues are a significant aspect of this issue.

3. The Education and Training footprint needs to be expanded in both breadth and depth.
   - Using the footprint established by the Fundamental Process Tech training, broaden the offerings to other disciplines and industry sectors.
   - Expand the Process Tech training from fundamental to more advanced.

Recommendations for Action

Workforce development should receive priority attention using all of the resources available in the region and elsewhere in the state because of the area's tight labor-market conditions and its aging workforce. WDG's following recommendations for action are offered as *priority* steps to be taken by RREDI and its allies. We urge that actions be coordinated in a collaborative effort with the River Parishes Workforce Investment Board, employers across the business spectrum, GNO Inc, LED, the Louisiana Department of Labor, the Louisiana Chemical Association, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce, and others. Together these agencies can create a consortium for workforce change and can marshal limited resources in a focused action.

1. **Develop stronger educator/employer linkages to enhance the use of the region's educational resources by small and mid-sized employers for employee training and recruiting, to alert employers to the full breadth of educational resources available in the region, and to provide the educators with information on the training needs of area employers.** A designated neutral third party would be an essential agent for change, serving as a catalyst to bring these employers and educators together.
2. **Promote the broader use of co-op and internship programs among college and university students in the region, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, area high schools, and area employers.** The consortium is encouraged to work closely with area employers to develop co-op and internship programs in a variety of fields. Such programs can enhance recruitment of students by employers upon graduation, and build an experienced "fresh-out" workforce. The consortium can help employers by providing program coordination at the educational institutions, making contacts, searching out best practices, and coordinating low- or moderate-cost housing for summer interns from outside the region.
3. **Promote a greater role by the private sector in workforce training.** Because conditions are changing, employers need to recognize that workforce development is no longer the sole responsibility of educators and workforce-development professionals. Employers must now be part of the process. Examples in which employers can participate include: formalized programs in mentoring (by trained employees); job-shadowing with educators, principals, and guidance counselors; and one-on-one mentoring between employees and students on personal development, job skills, and life skills (similar to Big Brother and Big Sister programs). A broader use of the Junior Achievement Program or similar concept is urged within the educational system.
4. **Actively work with employers to improve their human-resource practices.** The designated lead agency, as a catalyst, is urged to promote improved human-resource practices among area employers. Examples include use of a career-laddering model; providing flexibility in work hours and use of vacation time in partial-day increments; flexible work scheduling; and expanded training on company time. Promotional programs could include after-hours or breakfast seminars or webinars with human-resource-policy experts from within or outside the region. The special needs of small employers will have to be considered.
5. **Encourage employers to keep and attract employees over 50 years old.** To attract the large numbers of the region's mature residents that are not working now but would like to work, and to retain currently employed mature workers in the workplace, special employer accommodations will have to be considered that meet the needs of these people, such as flexible working hours, part-time work, and, for the currently employed, phased retirement programs. Program ideas have been advanced by several AARP studies, including *Staying Ahead of the Curve 2004: Employer Best Practices for Mature Workers*, and *The Business Case for Workers Age 50+: Planning for Tomorrow's Talent needs in Today's Competitive Environment*. Both of these publications are available on AARP's

website (www.aarp.org). According to our household survey, these residents are well educated and possess skills needed to fill some of the current workforce gaps. We also urge RREDI to investigate some of the best practices across the country for keeping and attracting residents over the age of 50 in the workforce. One example is the *Arizona Mature Worker Initiative*. The contact for the initiative and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices can be found on the website www.wdgtech.com/workforce.

6. **Provide job counseling to the retired who want to continue working, and to the not-employed who may wish to re-enter the workforce.** These individuals could use a variety of training programs, including career-changing opportunities and challenges, available educational resources for training and skills enhancement, skills testing, career counseling, and résumé writing. Such programs could be offered by the River Parishes Workforce Investment Board at various venues across the region to maximize access and availability.
7. **Conduct an ongoing labor recruitment effort across the southeast U.S. and possibly the entire country.** Develop a recruitment strategy that is aimed at all working-age groups. Special marketing messages for each of these groups should be developed that address their key issues. These issues could be developed through a variety of focus groups, and the marketing material then created from the findings of those focus groups. The messages can be crafted into special sections on a central website and used in hard-copy material and in special direct-mail solicitations. A lead agency, such as RREDI, could serve as the facilitator and coordinator of special recruitment efforts for area employers. Part of the lead agency's role would be assurance that duplicative recruitment efforts are not being made. Coordination with GNO Inc. is particularly urged.
8. **Attract and retain the "Talented Young" through quality-of-life enhancements and niche marketing.** It is recommended that the region make a concerted effort to attract and retain this population segment. The living environment attractive to these people needs to be expanded in the area. It is urged that focus groups be conducted with local residents in the 22-to-35-year age range to determine what they want. Successful developments will be slow and will be created by a blend of actions by the public and private sectors. The public-sector role will be in regulatory, incentive, or facility-development efforts. Local development may contain elements used in other locations, but what happens in the region must be based on existing resources, conditions, and needs.
9. **Create a structured job-assistance program among area employers to find work opportunities for the spouses of relocating personnel.** A centralized job-opportunities clearinghouse should be established to share information regarding professional and non-professional employment for relocating spouses. The clearinghouse is also encouraged to create an assistance network that can provide community information and guidance on adjusting to the local and regional cultural environment.
10. **Improve graduation rates at area high schools, technical centers, colleges, and universities.** More student monitoring and intervention programs, focused tutoring efforts, or financial assistance programs are needed to reduce high school dropout rates and college/university retention rates.
11. **Improve the quality of education in the region.** It is important that the quality of education be high at all of the region's high schools. Strategies to meet the Average Yearly Progress requirements of the No-Child-Left-Behind initiatives must be strongly supported by the communities and the entire parishes region. In order to generate a quality workforce and attract skilled workers to the region, system-wide educational excellence is necessary.

12. **Improve the state's educational standing.** In data from the National Science Foundation and *Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness*, produced by the Institute for Competitive Workforce, Louisiana gets poor grades. The consortium is urged to lobby aggressively to ensure that programs are underway to improve the state's educational performance.
13. **Develop an innovative workforce strategic plan that**
    - Changes requirements and training models to meet learning and social needs
    - Includes college graduates and "at-risk" youth
    - Includes improved human-resource policies
    - Improves the image of vocational employment among high school and middle school students and their parents
14. **Publicize all of your efforts and involve community and elected leadership.**
15. **Pursue more funding for vocational training at LTC.**
16. **Follow the state's Comprehensive Plan for Addressing Louisiana's Workforce Crisis.**
17. **Work with LA DOL to revise the region's forecasts.**
18. **Target out-commuters to work in the region.**
19. **Develop more residential areas to attract in-commuters.**

Workforce Alliance offers the following recommendations

1. **The Education and Training footprint is urged to be expanded in both breadth and depth**
    - Using the footprint established by the Fundamental Process Tech training, broaden the offerings to other disciplines and industry sectors.
2. **Expand the Process Tech training from fundamental to more advanced**
    - Strengthen the focus on job readiness and relational competency training
    - Ability to work in a self-directed environment
    - Ability to work in diverse teams
    - Work-ethic issues
    - Balancing work and family-life issues
3. **Provide assistance with recruiting materials that showcase positive aspects of work and quality-oflife issues in the River Parishes.**

FIGURE 1: RIVER PARISHES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTHERN U.S.

FIGURE 2: RIVER PARISHES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

FIGURE 3: DETAIL OF RIVER PARISHES STUDY AREA

LABOR ASSESSMENT

Geographic Orientation

1. **The River Region is located in southeastern Louisiana, approximately 30 miles west of New Orleans, using La Place as a reference point. The River Parishes region consists of the parishes of St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist. The region is bordered by Lafourche Parish to the south, Assumption and Ascension Parishes to the west, Jefferson Parish to the east, and Livingston Parish to the northwest. To the north and northeast the River Region is bordered by Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas.** In 2007, according to Claritas estimates, the region encompasses a population base of 128,488 residents. The city of La Place contains 33,538 residents (2007 Claritas estimate), and makes up the largest population center in the region, accounting for over 26% of the region's population.
2. **Primary access to the region is provided by I-10, which extends between Lake Charles in the west through the entire southern section of the state (west to east), eastwards into Mississippi.** The region is at the convergence of a number of U.S., state, and local roadways, including I-310, I-55, US-90, US-61, and LA-3127. This highway network provides access to a large labor shed extending westward into Baton Rouge and eastward into New Orleans.
3. **St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes are within the eight-parish New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area.** St. James Parish is not within the metro area, but Greater New Orleans Inc, the economic development agency serving the greater New Orleans area, considers it as part of the greater region.

Population, Demographics and Labor Force Overview

1. **The population base of the region and several of the commute zones studied has been growing since 2000; however, forecasts show static population for the region over the next five years.** The region's current estimated population is 128,488, according to Claritas. Between 2000 and 2007, the region's population increased by 16,156 residents, according to Claritas estimates. Between 2007 and 2012, the population is expected to decrease by 154 residents, according to Claritas, bringing the projected population in 2012 to 128,334. (Refer to Table 1). St. Charles and St. John Parishes are expected to see modest growth, while St. James Parish is expected to see a decline in population. The populations within the commute zones of St. Charles and St. John Parishes have had declines since 2000. These declines occurred because the commute zones of these parishes extend into sectors of the New Orleans Metropolitan Area that lost population due to Hurricane Katrina. Claritas forecasts a recovery and significant population gains in these commute zones over the next five years.

TABLE 1: Population of the Parish, Commute Zone, Region, State, and U.S.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Claritas

Area	1990 Census	2000 Census	2007 Claritas	2012 Claritas	Percent Change			
					Census		Claritas	
					1990-2000	2000-2007	1990-2007	2007-2012
St. Charles Parish	42,437	48,072	54,945	55,009	13.3%	14.3%	29.5%	0.1%
St. John the Baptist Parish	39,996	43,044	51,138	51,789	7.6%	18.8%	27.9%	1.3%
St. James Parish	20,879	21,216	22,045	21.536	1.6%	5.6%	7.3%	-3.9%
3-Parish Region	103,312	112,332	128,488	128,334	8.7%	14.4%	24.4%	-0.1%
St. Charles 45 Min CZ	1,218,888	1,232,981	946,795	1,118,176	1.2%	-23.2%	-22.3%	18.1%
St. Charles 60 Min CZ	1,465,708	1,526,118	1,275,763	1,466,379	4.1%	-16.4%	-13.0%	14.9%
St. James 45 Min CZ	300,364	350,893	396,687	404,655	16.8%	13.1%	32.1%	2.0%
St. James 60 Min CZ	1,117,212	1,198,337	1,202,115	1,246,078	7.3%	0.3%	7.6%	3.7%
St. John the Baptist 45 Min CZ	1,179,823	1,195,215	937,376	1,096,758	1.3%	-21.6%	-20.5%	17.0%
St. John the Baptist 60 Min CZ	1,571,200	1,648,826	1,417,527	1,600,295	4.9%	-14.0%	-9.8%	12.9%
Louisiana	4,219,973	4,468,976	4,331,642	4,544,547	5.9%	-3.1%	2.6%	4.9%
U.S.	248,709,873	281,421,906	301,045,522	314,920,978	13.2%	7.0%	21.0%	4.6%

2. **The River Parishes region has a slightly younger workforce than the state and nation.** According to Claritas, the median age for the three counties in 2007 is 35.1 years, compared to 35.4 years in Louisiana and 36.6 years in the U.S. This profile can be an advantage, as some companies prefer to locate operations in areas with a median age that approximates or is below the national norm for optimum access to younger talent. Younger employees typically offer a higher energy level, technical awareness, and flexibility to learn; they tend to learn faster; are more creative, agile, and flexible; and typically require lower healthcare costs and salaries than older employees do. An older-aged population can limit opportunities by employers for future workforce expansion.

3. **The region's concentrations of young and working-age residents are expected to increase more slowly, and in some cases decrease, compared to the national rates over the next five years – which can be a disadvantage for future economic growth and sustainability.** Claritas forecasts show the concentrations of young residents in the 18-to-34-year age groups will increase at a rate slightly higher than the nation on average over the next five years. However, the number of residents in the 35-to-54-year age group is expected to decrease considerably over the next five years. (Refer to Table 2).

TABLE 2: Change in Age Distribution for the Parish, Region, State, and U.S., 2007-2012
Source: Claritas

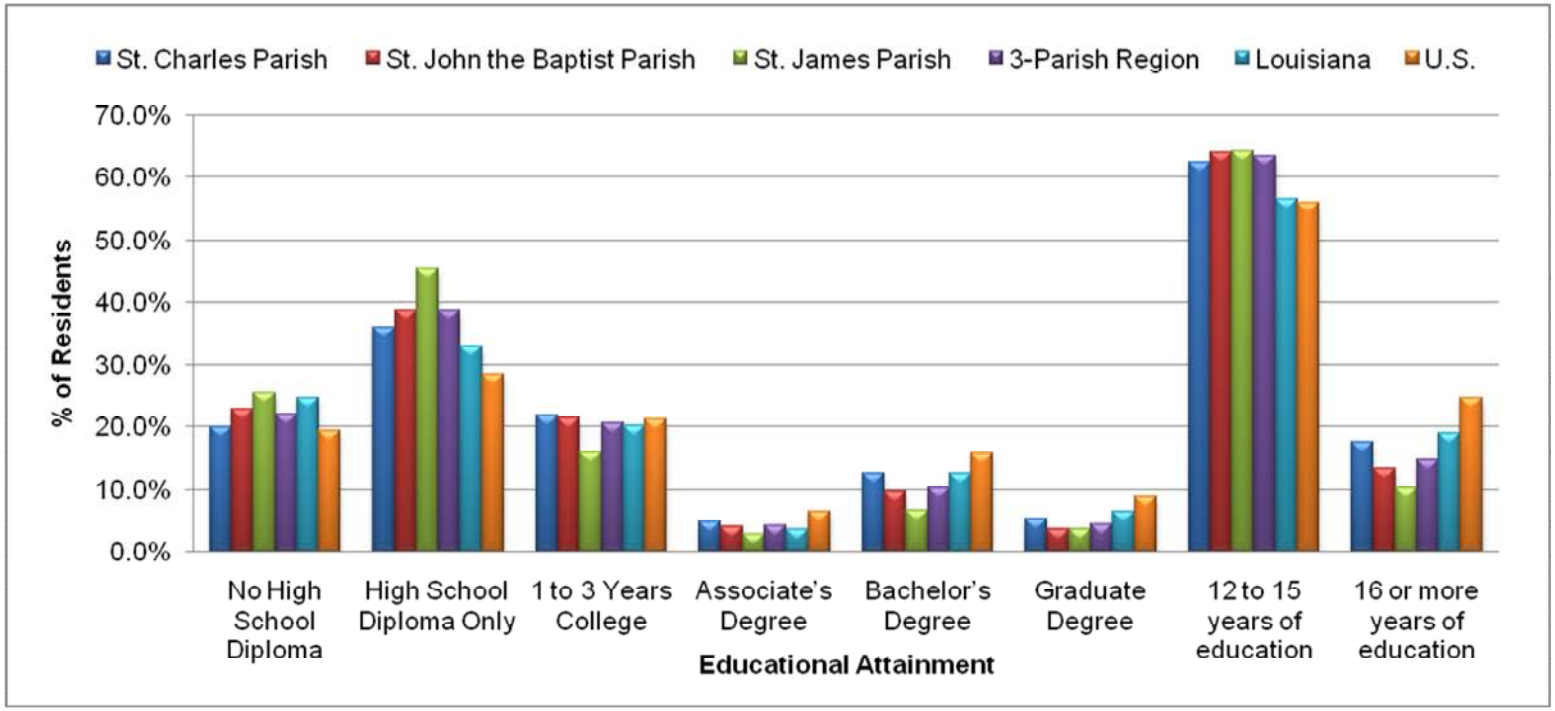
Area	Median Age	Projected % Change in Age Distribution, 2007-2012					
		0-17	18-34	35-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over
St. Charles Parish	36.2	-8.3%	5.7%	-10.0%	25.1%	22.0%	8.9%
St. John the Baptist Parish	33.3	-4.8%	3.2%	-7.1%	20.9%	29.2%	10.7%
St. James Parish	36.2	-8.2%	1.4%	-14.2%	14.5%	3.4%	5.4%
3-Parish Region	35.1	-6.9%	3.9%	-9.6%	21.6%	20.5%	8.7%
Louisiana	35.4	1.7%	3.7%	-0.9%	19.2%	18.8%	10.3%
U.S.	36.6	1.3%	2.3%	-0.1%	18.4%	20.6%	7.2%

4. **The River region offers a modestly educated adult population.** The educational levels in which the region exceeds the national norm is in “no high school diploma”, and “high school diploma only”, but trails the U.S. average in the percent of residents with post-high-school education. According to Claritas estimates, 22.0% of residents do not have a high school diploma versus 19.4% nationally, 38.7% of the region’s residents have a high school diploma only versus a U.S. average of 28.4%, and 24.7 % have some post-high-school education but not a four-year degree compared to 27.6% for the nation. The percentage of residents with 16 years or more of education is 10 percentage points behind the national average. Refer to Table 3 and Figure 4.

TABLE 3: Education Levels by Parish, Region, State, and U.S., 2007
Source: Claritas

Area	No High School Diploma	High School Diploma Only	1 to 3 Years College	Associate’s Degree	Bachelor’s Degree	Graduate Degree	12 to 15 years of education	16 or more years of education
St. Charles Parish	20.0%	36.0%	21.7%	4.7%	12.5%	5.2%	62.4%	17.6%
St. John the Baptist Parish	22.7%	38.7%	21.4%	4.0%	9.6%	3.6%	64.1%	13.2%
St. James Parish	25.5%	45.5%	16.0%	2.8%	6.6%	3.6%	64.3%	10.2%
3-Parish Region	22.0%	38.7%	20.6%	4.1%	10.3%	4.3%	63.4%	14.6%
Louisiana	24.7%	32.8%	20.2%	3.5%	12.4%	6.5%	56.5%	18.9%
U.S.	19.4%	28.4%	21.2%	6.4%	15.7%	8.9%	56.0%	24.6%

FIGURE 4: Educational Attainment by Parish, Region, State, and U.S., 2007
Source: Claritas

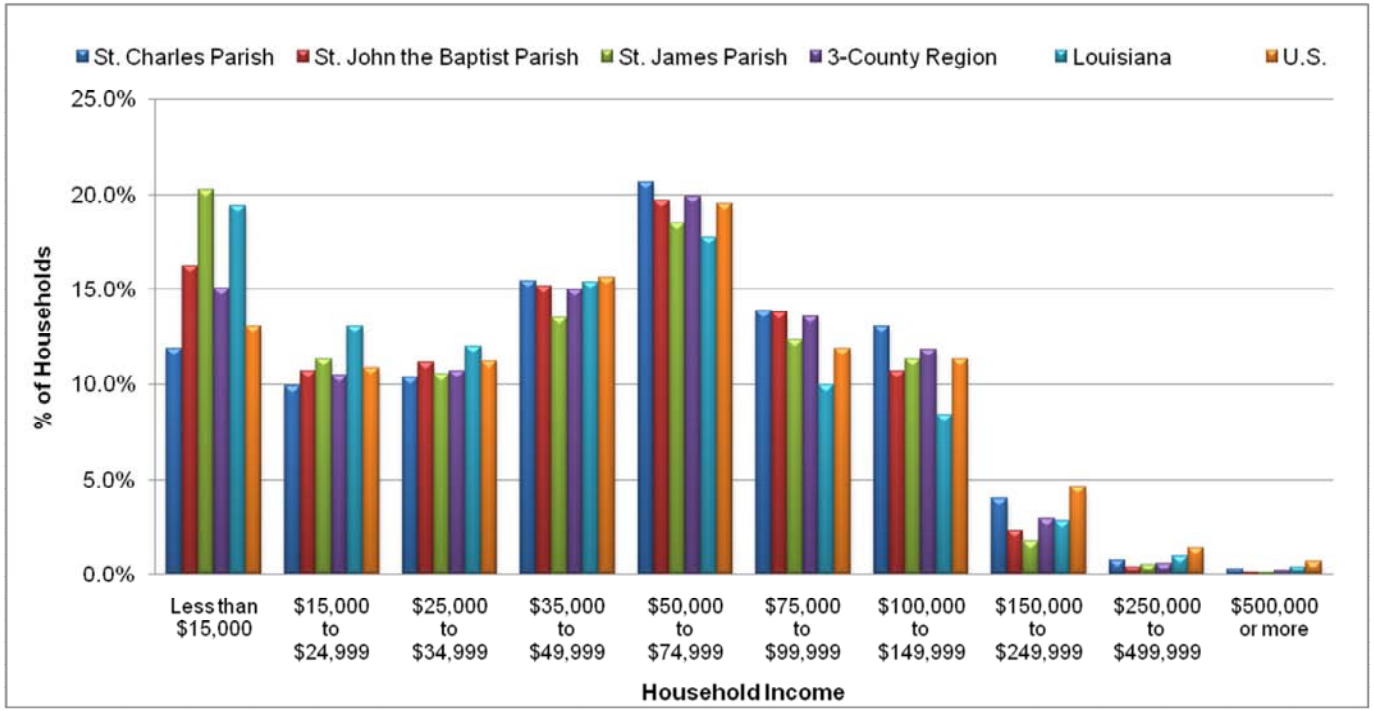


5. **Household incomes in the region are higher than Louisiana but lower than the national averages.** In 2007, the median household income in the region ($48,830) is about 21% higher than the Louisiana average ($40,371) and about 1% lower than the national average ($49,314). The profile of the median household income distribution shows a bi-modal, middle/upper-middle- and lower-middle-income pattern. Refer to Table 4 and Figure 5.
   - The percentage of households earning less than $15,000 exceeds the national average. St. John and St. James Parishes contribute to this spike.
   - The percentage of households with incomes between $50,000 and $149,000 exceeds the national average.
   - St. Charles Parish's median household income is higher than the medians of the region, the state, and the nation.
   - According to Claritas, 36.2% of the households in the River Parishes region earn less than $35,000 annually, compared to 44.5% in Louisiana and 35.1% nationally. This slightly-higher-than-average distribution could be an advantage, since WDG frequently finds that the higher the percentage of households earning less than $35,000, the more likely it is to have residents interested in upgrading their jobs and career advancement, working second jobs, or working as second-income earners.

TABLE 4: Household Incomes by Parish, Region, State, and U.S., 2007
Source: Claritas

Area	Median Household Income	% of Households Earning		
		Less than $35,000	Between $35,000 and $75,000	Greater than $75,000
St. Charles Parish	$52,984	32.1%	36.1%	31.8%
St. John the Baptist Parish	$46,892	38.0%	34.8%	27.2%
St. James Parish	$43,833	42.0%	32.0%	25.9%
3-Parish Region	$48,830	36.2%	34.9%	29.0%
Louisiana	$40,371	44.5%	33.1%	22.4%
U.S.	$49,314	35.1%	35.1%	29.8%

FIGURE 5: Household Income Distribution for by Parish, Region, State, and U.S., 2007
Source: Claritas



6. **According to the U.S. Census Bureau's *County Business Patterns*, the River Region's top five industry sectors in 2005 (as measured by employment) were *manufacturing* (9,223), *retail trade* (3,960), *wholesale trade* (3,692), *administration* (3,018), and *transportation and warehousing* (3,006).** These five industry sectors encompassed nearly 65% of all jobs in the region. (Refer to Table 5).

TABLE 5: Industry Growth in the Region, Louisiana, and the U.S. – Two digit NAICS Codes
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2005 and 2000

		3-Parish Region				Louisiana		U.S.	
2-Digit NAICS	Industry	# Jobs 2005	# Estabs. 2005	Jobs % Chg. '00-'05	Estabs. % Chg. '00-'05	Jobs % Chg. '00-'05	Estabs. % Chg. '00-'05	Jobs % Chg. '00-'05	Estabs. % Chg. '00-'05
-	Total-All Industries	36,320	1,940	4.8%	6.5%	1.6%	1.8%	2%	6%
Industry Sectors in which Regional Job Growth or Establishment Growth Exceeds U.S. Growth									
11	Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Agriculture Support	20	3	**100.0%**	-25.0%	-16.5%	-13.7%	-8%	-8%
21	Mining	342	15	17.1%	-6.3%	7.5%	-8.9%	9%	4%
22	Utilities	810	17	0.0%	-56.4%	-12.4%	1.8%	-3%	0%
31	Manufacturing	9,223	83	-5.7%	-14.4%	-10.1%	-2.5%	-17%	-6%
42	Wholesale Trade	3,692	155	**42.6%**	9.9%	-7.9%	-9.5%	-2%	-4%
44	Retail Trade	3,960	297	9.9%	-1.7%	-2.0%	-1.9%	3%	1%
56	Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	3,018	124	6.5%	21.6%	6.8%	4.6%	2%	5%
61	Educational Services	666	27	**29.8%**	50.0%	**12.4%**	3.9%	**14%**	18%
62	Healthcare & Social Assistance	2,995	158	**24.5%**	1.9%	**14.0%**	12.8%	**14%**	13%
71	Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	528	36	**55.8%**	20.0%	**15.0%**	2.9%	**11%**	17%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,275	153	6.2%	-1.9%	-3.7%	-2.3%	2%	2%
99	Unclassified Establishments	10	2	-52.4%	-77.8%	-75.6%	-79.5%	-78%	-76%
Industry Sectors in which Regional Job Growth or Establishment Growth Meets/Is Lower than U.S. Growth									
23	Construction	2,029	168	-24.9%	8.4%	-12.6%	2.9%	3%	11%
48	Transportation & Warehousing	3,006	86	-2.3%	-33.8%	-1.5%	-1.5%	10%	11%
51	Information	255	28	-5.2%	21.7%	8.9%	6.9%	-4%	6%
52	Finance & Insurance	783	136	5.2%	6.3%	1.3%	5.4%	8%	13%
53	Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	365	79	-49.0%	8.2%	1.9%	9.4%	10%	23%
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	925	147	10.5%	18.5%	**11.7%**	9.7%	**13%**	14%
55	Management of Companies & Enterprises	130	8	-60.4%	-27.3%	-4.3%	6.4%	-1%	0%
72	Accommodation & Food Services	2,466	157	1.8%	21.7%	**11.7%**	8.6%	**12%**	11%

** Top five industry sectors by percentage employment growth in **bold**.*

7. **The top five expanding industries in the region between 2000 and 2005 (as measured by employment growth, where trend data is available), as shown in Table 5, are: arts, entertainment & recreation; educational services; forestry, fishing, hunting, & agriculture support; healthcare and social assistance; and wholesale trade.** Table 6 summarizes the top five growing industry sectors in the region, Louisiana, and the U.S. As the table shows, the five leading industry sectors in the region differ somewhat from those of the state and nation.

TABLE 6: Industry Sector Commonalities – Region, Louisiana, and the U.S.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2005 and 2000

Industry Sectors	Region	Louisiana	U.S.
Accommodation & Food Services		X	X
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	X	X	X
Educational Services	X	X	X
Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Agriculture Support	X		
Healthcare & Social Assistance	X	X	X
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services		X	X
Wholesale Trade	X		

8. **The region's employment ratio by occupation matches or exceeds national averages in ten occupational groups, but falls short in the knowledge-based occupations.** The five most dominant regional occupations are office/administrative support, production, sales/related, construction/extraction, and transportation/material moving.
   - The region's employment ratios lag behind the nation in several knowledge-based occupational groups, including arts/design/entertainment/sports/media, computer and mathematical, financial specialists, healthcare practitioner/technician, legal, and management-including farmers and farm managers. (Refer to Table 7, next page). In the short term, employers seeking these knowledge-based skills may need to recruit workers from outside the region to fill replacement and expansion needs. Educational institutions and workforce-training providers are encouraged to cooperate in identifying these skill deficiencies and addressing strategies to bolster the supply of knowledge-based skills in the region.

9. **Workforce Alliance's data shows that the distribution of occupations in the region has remained constant since 2003.**

TABLE 7: Percent Employment within Occupational Groups for the Region, Louisiana, and U.S. 2007
Source: Claritas

Regional Occupational Groups that Match or Exceed National Employment Ratios			
Occupational Group	**3-Parish Region**	**Louisiana**	**U.S.**
Architecture/Engineering*	2.3%	1.9%	2.1%
Building/Grounds Cleaning/Maint	3.4%	3.4%	3.2%
Construction/Extraction	7.6%	7.4%	5.5%
Education/Training/Library*	5.8%	6.2%	5.7%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair*	6.4%	4.7%	4.0%
Life/Physical/Social Science*	1.3%	0.9%	0.9%
Office/Administrative Support	16.7%	14.9%	15.4%
Production	10.0%	7.4%	8.4%
Protective Service	2.4%	2.4%	2.0%
Transportation/Material Moving	7.6%	6.8%	6.1%
Regional Occupational Groups that Lag National Employment Ratios			
Occupational Group	**3-Parish Region**	**Louisiana**	**U.S.**
Arts/Design/Entert/Sports/Media*	1.0%	1.3%	1.9%
Business operations specialists	1.9%	1.5%	2.1%
Community/Social Services	1.0%	1.4%	1.5%
Computer and Mathematical*	1.0%	1.0%	2.5%
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	0.6%	0.8%	0.7%
Financial specialists*	1.5%	1.9%	2.2%
Food Preparation/Serving-related	4.2%	5.2%	4.7%
Healthcare Practitioner/Technician*	3.8%	5.4%	4.6%
Healthcare Support	1.8%	2.1%	2.0%
Legal*	0.7%	1.2%	1.1%
Management incl Farmers/Farm Mgrs*	6.9%	7.5%	9.4%
Personal Care/Service	2.3%	2.9%	2.8%
Sales/Related	9.9%	11.9%	11.3%
Total Knowledge-based Occupational Groups	***30.7%***	***32.0%***	***34.4%***

**Key Knowledge-based Occupational Groups*

10. **The WDG/YA workforce survey shows that most residents of the region work within the region.** The survey results show that 71.6% of the region's residents work in the region (St. Charles 32.8%, St. John 26.5%, and St. James 13.2%). Only 28.4% of the residents work outside the region, mostly in Jefferson Parish (15.5% of the region's residents).

11. **Data shows that 63% of the labor force for companies in the region come from within the region.** Actual payroll data from two representative employers in the region (by size and location), shows that 45.6% of the companies' workforce comes from St. Charles Parish, which is almost equivalent to that parish's share of the region's resident workforce (45.9%). The payroll data further shows that 11.2% of employees live in St. John Parish and 6.2% live in St. James Parish. Jefferson Parish is home to 15.8% of the companies' workforce, and Lafourche Parish is home to 6.6% of the companies' employees. Lafourche has the second largest concentration of employees outside the region.

Labor Availability

1. **The region's labor force increased by 9.3% between 2000 and 2007.** The region's annual average unemployment rate stood at 4.2% in 2007, higher than the Louisiana average (3.8%), but lower than the national average (4.6%). The unemployment rate was 6.1% in 2000.
   - Labor-force participation is slightly below average in the region (62.3% versus 64.1% nationally), which indicates a modest potential supply of additional workers that could be expected to enter and actively participate in the local workforce.
   - Labor-participation rates for the six-commute zones are also low, and all but one are lower than the national rate. (Refer to Tables 8 and 9)
   - The effective labor shed of area employers is larger than WDG has seen in other areas of the country. Employer-based data shows effective labor sheds of 45-to-60 minutes, compared to 30 minutes seen in most other locations. The difference is due to the higher salaries paid by many of the region's employers, and to the proximity of the region to large population centers in neighboring parishes within metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

TABLE 8: Parish Labor Force Dynamics
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau

	St. Charles Parish	St. John the Baptist Parish	St. James Parish	3-Parish Region	Louisiana	U.S.
Labor Force, 2007	26,443	22,705	8,430	57,578	1,997,873	153,124,000
% Change 2000-2007	10.7%	13.6%	-4.4%	9.3%	-1.6%	7.4%
Unemployment Rate, 2007	3.4%	4.4%	6.3%	4.2%	3.8%	4.6%
Labor Participation, 2007 (Claritas)	65.2%	62.2%	55.3%	62.3%	59.8%	64.1%

TABLE 9: Commute Zone Labor Force Dynamics
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau

Area	Labor Force 2007	% Change 2000-2007	Unemployment Rate, 2007	Labor Participation 2007 (Claritas)
St. Charles 45 Min CZ	463,058	-19.1%	6.5%	61.7%
St. Charles 60 Min CZ	622,265	-12.0%	6.1%	61.9%
St. James 45 Min CZ	199,055	17.4%	5.5%	64.5%
St. James 60 Min CZ	601,569	3.8%	5.8%	63.5%
St. John the Baptist 45 Min CZ	461,266	-17.2%	6.6%	62.1%
St. John the Baptist 60 Min CZ	700,287	-9.7%	6.1%	62.6%
3-Parish Region	57,578	9.3%	4.2%	62.3%
Louisiana	1,997,873	-1.6%	3.8%	59.8%
U.S.	153,124,000	7.4%	4.6%	64.1%

2. **One or more competitively paying office operations could potentially hire up to 1,173 qualified and screened workers during the first year of operation, depending on their facilities' locations in the region.** As seen in Table 10, these estimates are based on WDG's standard clerical/nonexempt-labor-supply model applied to both of the representative work sites, using, in part, results from the household survey. These estimates show the number of qualified clerical and administrative support employees an employer could potentially hire given a one-in-three selectivity and a one-in-five selectivity ratio.
   - The site located in St. John the Baptist Parish (60-minute commute zone) provides the largest qualified clerical labor supply (1,173); however, this supply becomes more limited (843) within the 45-minute commute zone, assuming a one-in-three selectivity ratio.
   - The St. James Parish location has a lower number of potential qualified workers (268) within the 45-minute commute zone, but remains accessible to a higher number of potential workers (889) within the 60-minute commute zone, assuming one-in-three selectivity ratio.
   - The St. Charles Parish location is accessible to a high number (861) of potential qualified workers in the 45-minute commute zone, and in the 60-minute commute zone (1,064) assuming one-in-three selectivity ratio.
   - Wages and salaries would have to exceed the prevailing average rates as shown in Exhibits B-10 and D-8. An operation with wages that significantly exceed the rates shown in these exhibits would be able to attract a higher number of qualified workers.

TABLE 10: Estimated Clerical and Administrative Support Labor Supply Yield by Commute Zone
Source: WDG estimate based on population and employment figures from Claritas

		Maximum Size of a Clerical/Office Operation:					
		St. Charles 45 Min CZ	St. Charles 60 Min CZ	St. James 45 Min CZ	St. James 60 Min CZ	St. John the Baptist 45 Min CZ	St. John the Baptist 60 Min CZ
1	Currently employed supply	3,424	4,470	1,504	4,590	3,418	5,163
2	Potential underemployment yield	12,736	17,046	4,715	15,650	12,722	18,502
3	Not employed	3,305	4,202	1,207	3,857	3,336	4,695
4	New labor force entrants	6,375	7,094	612	2,572	5,803	6,844
5	Total expected applicants – 1 year	25,840	32,811	8,039	26,670	25,278	35,203
6	Applicant commute propensity	12,920	16,406	4,019	13,335	12,639	17,602
7	Initial employer intercept	5,168	6,562	1,608	5,334	5,056	7,041
8	**Qualified Applicants**	2,584	3,281	804	2,667	2,528	3,520
9	**1-in-3 selectivity ratio**	861	1,094	268	889	843	1,173
10	**1-in-5 selectivity ratio**	517	656	161	533	506	704

Explanatory Notes

1. Estimate of currently employed clerical workers unhappy enough with their current job to apply. WDG assumes 5% of residents employed in administrative support/clerical occupations will apply for new positions.
2. Individuals currently working in low-level sales and service occupations (including health support, personal services occupations, and food prep/serving-related) who will apply. WDG assumes that 10% of residents currently employed in sales and service occupations will apply for new positions.
3. Not-employed residents that would be interested in working in office operations. WDG assumes 11% of not-employed residents will apply for office positions, based on the workforce survey not-employed characteristics.
4. Growth component to account for new entrants into the labor force. Includes a percentage of college graduates and new residents that are likely to apply for administrative/clerical positions.
5. Total eligible population.
6. Percentage of workers willing to commute up to 45-60 minutes for employment – based on prevailing area commuting patterns, 50% of the total number of applicants (line 5) is assumed. The propensity for under-employed residents and not-employed residents to commute longer distances for jobs meeting their expectations is not factored into the model. If it were, the number of potential applicants would be higher.
7. Percentage of workers (among those willing to commute as shown in line 6) who will work at new operation despite similar positions available between their residence and the original employers. In this case, it is assumed that an employer coming into the area will face competition from existing employers. It is assumed that 40% of workers will work at a new operation despite similar positions available between their residence and the new employer.
8. Number of applicants shown in line 7 passing initial screening and offered an interview. The actual percentage will vary according to the skills required by the operation, and the skill level of the available workforce. It is assumed 50% will qualify.
9. The number of employees an employer could hire assuming a selectivity ratio of one hire per three applicants.
10. The number of employees an employer could hire assuming a selectivity ratio of one hire per five applicants.

3. **One or more competitively paying manufacturing/distribution operations could potentially hire up to 1,161 qualified and screened workers, depending on their facilities' locations in the region.** As seen in Table 11, these estimates are based on WDG's standard manufacturing/distribution-labor-supply model applied to each of the three representative work sites, based upon data received from the household survey. These estimates show the number of qualified employees a manufacturing/distribution employer could potentially hire given a one-in-three selectivity and a one-in-five selectivity ratio.
   - The site located in St. John the Baptist Parish (60-minute commute zone) offers the largest clerical labor supply (1,161); however, this supply becomes more limited (830) within the 45-minute commute zone, assuming one-in-three selectivity ratio.
   - The St. James Parish location has a lower workforce potential (270) within the 45-minute commute zone, and 866 within the 60-minute commute zone, assuming one-in-three selectivity ratio.
   - The St. Charles Parish location offers the potential for 854 qualified workers in the 45-minute commute zone, and for 1,106 employees for a 60-minute commute zone, assuming one-in-three selectivity ratio.
   - Wages and salaries would have to exceed the prevailing average rates as shown in Exhibits B-10 and D-8. An operation with wages that significantly exceed the rates shown in these exhibits would be able to attract a higher number of qualified workers.

TABLE 11: Estimated Manufacturing/Distribution Labor Supply Yield by Commute Zone
Source: WDG estimate based on population and employment figures from Claritas

		St. Charles 45 Min CZ	St. Charles 60 Min CZ	St. James 45 Min CZ	St. James 60 Min CZ	St. John the Baptist 45 Min CZ	St. John the Baptist 60 Min CZ
1	Currently employed supply	3,615	4,965	1,739	4,782	3,586	5,454
2	Potential underemployment yield	12,926	17,356	4,798	15,843	12,865	18,788
3	Not employed	2,403	3,056	878	2,805	2,426	3,414
4	New labor force entrants	6,663	7,794	685	2,610	6,038	7,160
5	Total expected applicants-1 year	25,607	33,170	8,099	26,040	24,915	34,817
6	Applicant commute propensity	12,804	16,585	4,049	13,020	12,457	17,408
7	Initial employer intercept	5,121	6,634	1,620	5,208	4,983	6,963
8	**Qualified Applicants**	2,561	3,317	810	2,604	2,491	3,482
9	**1-in-3 selectivity ratio**	854	1,106	270	868	830	1,161
10	**1-in-5 selectivity ratio**	512	663	162	521	498	696

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 11 *(continued)*: Estimated Manufacturing/Distribution Labor Supply Yield by Commute Zone
Source: WDG estimate based on population and employment figures from Claritas

Explanatory Notes

1. Estimate of currently employed production, transportation/material moving, and installation/maintenance/repair workers unhappy enough with their current job to apply. WDG assumes 5% of residents employed in these occupations will apply for new positions.
2. Individuals currently working in low-level sales, service, and farming occupations who will apply. WDG assumes that 10% of residents currently employed in sales and service occupations agriculture will apply for new positions.
3. Not-employed residents that would be interested in working in manufacturing and distribution operations. WDG assumes 8% of not-employed residents will apply for manufacturing positions, based on the workforce survey not-employed characteristics. It is assumed both male and female residents will apply for positions.
4. Growth component to account for new entrants into the labor force. Includes a percentage of high school graduates and new residents that are likely to apply for administrative/clerical positions.
5. Total eligible population.
6. Percentage of workers willing to commute up to 45-60 minutes for employment – based on prevailing area commuting patterns, 50% of the total number of applicants (line 5) is assumed. The propensity for under-employed residents and not-employed residents to commute longer distances for jobs meeting their expectations is not factored into the model. If it were, the number of potential applicants would be higher.
7. Percentage of workers (among those willing to commute as shown in line 6) who will work at the new operation despite similar positions available between their residence and the original employers. In this case, it is assumed that a new employer coming into the area would be the employer-of-choice and a high percentage of workers would commute to the employer's new location. As more competitors enter the market, the percentage of workers accepting work at that location is assumed to decline. It is assumed that 40% of workers will work at the new operation.
8. Number of applicants shown in line 7 passing initial screening and offered an interview. The actual percentage will vary according to the skills required by the operation, and the skill level of the available workforce. It is assumed 50% would be qualified.
9. The number of employees an employer could hire assuming a selectivity ratio of one hire per three applicants.
10. The number of employees an employer could hire assuming a selectivity ratio of one hire per five applicants.

4. **WDG's Labor Stress Index shows a level of labor tightness in the New Orleans MSA that is slightly higher than other selected competitor communities in Louisiana and the nation.** WDG compared the New Orleans MSA's labor stress index to selected competitor metro areas. WDG designed and constructed the labor stress index as a tool for its corporate-location-consulting practice. The index shows the relative stress under which an area's labor market is functioning given various supply and demand pressures. The Index uses a variety of labor-related measures, including: civilian labor force size ; absolute and percentage changes in the civilian labor force between 2000 and 2007; elasticity in the 2007 civilian labor force; unemployment rates in 2000, 2005, and 2007; change in unemployment rates; and 2007 labor force participation rates.
   - The final scores for each MSA were indexed against the nation's highest scoring MSA (maximum score=100). The New Orleans MSA received an index score of 67, which shows tighter labor conditions than Mobile, AL and the nation. (Refer to Table 12).
   - The New Orleans MSA includes the parishes of: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany. The New Orleans MSA does not include St. James Parish.

TABLE 12: Comparative Labor Stress Index
Source: WDG (the lower the score the more labor stress)

Benchmark MSA's	Labor Stress Index Score (max=100)
Mobile, AL	68
New Orleans, LA	**67**
Baton Rouge, LA	61
U.S.	70

** Criteria and weighting detailed at right:*

***Labor Stress Index – Criteria and Weighting**

Criteria		Weighting
Civilian Labor Force	2007	10%
	2000	--
	Change 2000 - 2007	5%
	Pct. Change 2000 - 2007	10%
Civilian Labor Force Elasticity	2007 Monthly Minimum	--
	2007 Monthly Maximum	--
	Change Min to Max	15%
Unemployment	2007 Rate	15%
	2005 Rate	5%
	2000 Rate	5%
	Change in Rate 2005 - 2007	15%
	Change in Rate 2000 - 2007	5%
Labor Force Participation	2007 Rate	--
	Rate vs. MSA Maximum	15%
Total:		*100%*

5. **Of the 73 occupations for which sufficient data was received from the completed WDG employer survey, 19 (26%) can be recruited satisfactorily or better (median and average scores of 3.0 or higher).** None of the occupations received a "very good" availability rating (a median score of 4.0 and an average score of 4.0), but many received a "good" rating. All of the business and financial occupations, and most computer/mathematical occupations included in the survey, for which sufficient returns were received, can be recruited at satisfactory-to-good levels. Refer to Table 13.

TABLE 13: Select Occupations with Satisfactory or Better Availability, as Reported by Region Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008 (5=Plentiful; 1=Unavailable)

Occupational Group/Occupation	Responses	Average Score	Median Score
Architecture and Engineering			
Technicians (general)	13	3.0	3.0
Business and Financial			
Accountants	11	3.2	3.0
Financial analysts	7	3.3	4.0
Sales representatives	12	3.3	4.0
Computer and Mathematical			
Computer programmers	6	3.3	3.5
Computer security specialists	4	3.5	3.5
Computer software engineers	5	3.6	4.0
Computer systems analysts	5	3.6	4.0
Computer systems engineers/architects	4	3.5	3.5
Database administrators	9	3.2	3.0
Network and computer systems administrators	7	3.3	3.0
Network designers	4	3.5	3.5
Web developers	6	3.2	3.0

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 13 (*continued*): Select Occupations with Satisfactory or Better Availability, as Reported by Region Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008 (5=Plentiful; 1=Unavailable)

Occupational Group/Occupation	Responses	Average Score	Median Score
Construction and Extraction			
Carpenters	5	3.4	4.0
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical			
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	2	3.0	3.0
Life Sciences			
Chemists	6	3.0	3.0
Production			
Inspectors	3	3.3	3.0
Prepress technicians and workers (electronic)	2	3.0	3.0
Production operators	11	3.3	4.0

6. **Among the 73 occupations for which sufficient data was received, surveyed employers rated seven (10%) as having borderline-satisfactory-to-somewhat-unsatisfactory availability (median scores of 2.5 to 3.0 and average scores of 2.3 to 2.9).** The occupations are diverse and cover five major occupational groupings. (Refer to Table 14.)

TABLE 14: Select Occupations with Borderline to Somewhat Unsatisfactory Availability, as Reported by Area Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008 (5=Plentiful; 1=Unavailable)

Occupational Group/Occupation	Responses	Average Score	Median Score
Computer and Mathematical			
Web administrators	7	2.9	3.0
Construction and Extraction			
Brickmasons and blockmasons	2	2.5	2.5
Painters, construction and maintenance	5	2.4	3.0
Education			
Teachers, elementary	2	2.5	2.5
Management			
Computer and information systems managers	4	2.5	2.5
Office and Administrative Support			
Computer support specialists (tech support)	6	2.5	2.5
Customer service representatives	8	2.5	3.0

7. **Responding employers rated 22 (30%) of 73 occupations for which sufficient data was received as having tight-to-very-tight availability.** Median scores ranged from 2.0 to 2.5 and average scores ranged from 2.0 to 2.4. Tight labor market conditions were reported in seven of the major occupation groups, but production occupations dominate the list. (Refer to Table 15.)

TABLE 15: Select Occupations with Tight or Very Tight Availability, as Reported by Area Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008 (5=Plentiful; 1=Unavailable)

Occupational Group/Occupation	Responses	Average Score	Median Score
Architecture and Engineering			
Associate engineers (2-year degree)	7	2.1	2.0
Engineers	13	2.2	2.0
Engineers, electric and electronic	12	2.1	2.0
Engineers, mechanical	13	2.2	2.0
Construction and Extraction			
Construction laborers	7	2.6	2.0
Electricians	13	2.4	2.0
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	5	2.0	2.0
Education			
Teachers, post-secondary	2	2.0	2.0
Teachers assistants	2	2.0	2.0
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical			
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	2	2.0	2.0
Registered nurses	3	2.7	2.0
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair			
Maintenance workers, machinery	19	2.4	2.0
Unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair)	13	2.5	2.0
Production			
Assemblers and fabricators	3	2.3	2.0
Bindery workers	1	2.0	2.0
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, metal	3	2.0	2.0
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, plastic	1	2.0	2.0
Instrumentation technicians	5	2.6	2.0
Machinists	8	2.5	2.0
Team assemblers	1	2.0	2.0
Welders	5	2.2	2.0
Transportation and Material Moving			
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor trailer	7	2.3	2.0

8. **Twenty-five (34%) of the 73 occupations for which sufficient data was received were considered extremely difficult to recruit, with few to no available candidates.** Although occupations reported as being unavailable in the region encompass nine of the occupation groups, the list is dominated by healthcare practitioners/technical occupations. (Refer to Table 16.)

TABLE 16: Select Occupations that are Unavailable in the Region, as Reported by Area Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008 (5=Plentiful; 1=Unavailable)

Occupational Group/Occupation	Responses	Average Score	Median Score
Architecture and Engineering			
Engineers, industrial	6	1.8	1.5
Construction and Extraction			
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	2	1.5	1.5
Education			
Teachers, secondary	2	1.5	1.5
Teachers, special education	2	1.5	1.5
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical			
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	1	1.0	1.0
Diagnostic medical sonographers	1	1.0	1.0
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners, all other	1	1.0	1.0
Healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other	1	1.0	1.0
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	1	1.0	1.0
Medical records and health information technicians	2	1.5	1.5
Occupational therapists	1	1.0	1.0
Physical therapists	1	1.0	1.0
Physician assistants	1	1.0	1.0
Radiologic technologists and technicians	1	1.0	1.0
Respiratory therapists	2	1.5	1.5
Healthcare Support			
Home health aides	1	1.0	1.0
Medical assistants	1	1.0	1.0
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	1	1.0	1.0
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair			
Electrical and electronic repairers	9	1.7	1.0
Industrial machinery mechanics	7	1.9	2.0
Life Sciences			
Clinical data managers	1	1.0	1.0
Medical scientists	1	1.0	1.0
Management			
Engineering managers	5	1.8	1.0
Industrial production managers	5	1.6	2.0
Production			
Testers	2	1.5	1.5

9. **Summarizing the above information, the employer survey results show that the region's labor market is very tight.** Employers report tight or unavailable recruiting conditions for 64% of the occupations for which sufficient data was received. Business/financial and computer/mathematical occupations are the most available, while healthcare (practitioners and technical) and production occupations are in the shortest supply. The availability distribution is presented in Table 17 below.

TABLE 17: Summary of Availability Distribution of Occupations within Each Occupational Group, as Reported by Area Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008

Occupational Group	Availability Distribution by Number of Occupations			
	Satisfactory To Good	Borderline	Tight to Very Tight	Unavailable
Architecture and Engineering	1	-	4	1
Business and Financial	3	-	-	-
Computer and Mathematical	9	1	-	-
Construction and Extraction	1	2	3	1
Education	-	1	2	2
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	1	-	2	11
Healthcare Support	-	-	-	3
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	-	-	2	2
Life Sciences	1	-	-	2
Management	-	1	-	2
Office and Administrative Support	-	2	-	-
Production	3	-	8	1
Transportation and Material Moving	-	-	1	-
Total	19	7	22	25
Pct. of Total	26%	10%	30%	34%

10. **All employer groups in Workforce Alliance's focus groups stated that they are facing new challenges attracting and hiring qualified employees. Challenges include:**
    - Applicants demonstrate appropriate pre-employment qualifications; however, the employers are seeing a higher rate of declinations due to: inability to pass drug screen and/or background check; not showing up for work; inability to balance work and personal issues/desires; new generation of employees becoming easily bored and leaving the organization at higher rates than has been experienced previously.
11. **Employers in Workforce Alliance's focus groups indicated they are responding to challenges of workforce demographics and availability issues by:**
    - Working collaboratively on major initiatives
    - Broadening the definition of the traditional labor profile
    - Creating job-sharing opportunities
    - Altering schedules to accommodate part-time and/or seasonal work

12. **Employers express some difficulty recruiting managers and professional talent from outside the area.** Surveyed employers report a median score of 2.0 and an average score of 2.6 (on a scale where 1=unable to recruit and 5=easily recruited) on their ability to relocate talent from outside the commuting area. (Refer to Exhibit B-1 in Appendix B).
    - Employers report below-average employment opportunities for "trailing" spouses. Employers provide a median score of 2.0 and an average score of 2.3 on the availability of jobs for spouses who relocate with their wives/husbands/partners/significant others.
    - The availability, quality, and cost of housing for relocatees is rated slightly below satisfactory (median score of 3.0 and an average score of 2.8), and is not considered a deterrent to job acceptance.
    - The quality of life as perceived by job candidates is rated as slightly below satisfactory (median score of 3.0 and an average score of 2.9), and does not serve as deterrent to job acceptance.
13. **The impact of "Baby Boomer" retirement has not yet really begun nationally, as the first of this generation is now 62 years old; however, as the Boomers age, an unprecedented impact on the nation's labor force will occur in escalating proportions over the next decade.** The first real hit from this coming wave will be in four to five years. This impact will significantly affect every sector of our economy, including corporate structure and policy, economic growth, and labor availability and cost. Impacts that are even more significant are projected in most of Europe and Japan. The effects will be worldwide. With that perspective, employer experiences offer an indication of labor-force-related trends beginning to be felt in the study area.
    - WDG constructed a Boomer Retirement Impact Index, which measures the impact retiring Baby Boomers will have on an MSA's workforce compared to the national average. The index compares four key measures, including: the percentage of the population between the ages of 45 and 64, the median age, the unemployment rate, and the percentage change in the civilian labor force. MSA's are assigned a group (quintile) rating and the higher the rating, the lower the potential impact of Boomer retirement on the MSA workforce (e.g., 5=the least impact; 4=a below-average impact; 3=an average impact; 2=an above-average impact; 1=the highest impact).
    - The New Orleans MSA's potential boomer-retirement impact is rated among the highest in the nation. Of the other communities reviewed for this assessment, Mobile's boomer-retirement impact is rated as above average. (Refer to Table 18).

TABLE 18: Boomer Retirement Impact Index
Source: WDG

Benchmark MSA's	Group Rating (5 is Lowest Impact)
Baton Rouge, LA	4
Mobile, AL	2
New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	**1**
U.S. Average	***3***

** Criteria and Weighting detailed at right:*

***Boomer Index – Criteria and Weighting**

Criteria	Weighting
Pct. of Population Ages 45-64 (2007)	30%
Median Age (2007)	30%
Unemployment Rate (2006 annual average)	20%
Pct. Change in Labor Force (2001-2006)	20%
Total:	*100%*

- Data from WDG's employer survey indicates that, on average, 12.9% of currently employed workers are presently eligible for retirement, or will become eligible for retirement over the next five years. This equates to approximately 7,428 employees eligible to retire over the next five years, based on the region's employment of 57,578 workers (2007 annual average).

- Employers report that they are not confident or are unsure they will be able to fill retirement vacancies in 37% of the 85 positions held by employees eligible to retire now or over the next five years. Among the 31 reported occupations in question are administrative, accounting, installation (maintenance & repair), mechanics, production operators, and managers.
- Workers 65 years of age or older continue to serve as a vital workforce component. 36% of the survey responding employers report they actively recruit people of retirement age. Employers responding to WDG's survey report using these older workers in a variety of jobs across the board, including assemblers, engineers, management, and teachers. Employers are very satisfied with the work ethic and skill levels of their older employees, especially compared to that of younger employees. However, some employers report many older residents do not want to re-enter the workforce, and some report that older employers have outdated skill sets or that the positions are too physically demanding.

14. **The River Parishes region has a potential hidden labor supply with moderately diversified skills, an important component of which is not-employed residents that are interested in employment**. WDG estimates from the household survey data and population data that there are roughly 9,037 residents aged 18 to 74 years in the region that are not employed but are interested in employment. See Table 19 and the profile of residents not employed but interested in work in Appendix C.
    - The WDG/YA survey shows that 57.9% of the region's not-employed residents would like to work. More than half of this population would like to work full time, with the remaining population desiring part-time employment. Most of the not-employed are not currently working because they are retired. Almost all of those residents that would like to work would want jobs that match their past work experience (led by cleaning and maintenance, construction, and food preparation and serving occupations).
    - A majority of not-employed residents who are interested in working (68.0% or 6,145) are interested in full-time work, as shown in Table 19. Meanwhile, an estimated 2,892 individuals are not working, but would be interested in part-time employment.

TABLE 19: Employment Preferences of Not-Employed Residents 18-74 Years Old
Source: YA Residential Survey, Spring 2008

Interest	Percentage	Number
Total-Not Employed	**100%**	**15,609**
Interested in Employment	57.9%	9,037
Not Interested in Employment/Did not Respond	42.1%	6,572
Employment Preference		
Full-Time	68.0%	6,145
Part-Time	32.0%	2,892
Total	**100%**	**9,037**

- Among not-employed residents, 38.8% are under the age of 35, indicating a modest pool of younger workers who would welcome improved job opportunities. 44.9% of the not-employed residents interested in employment are over the age of 45, compared to 49.8% for the employed population. See Table 20.

TABLE 20: Age Distribution of Not-Employed Residents Interested in Employment
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Age	Percentage	Number
18-24	19.4%	1,752
25-34	19.4%	1,752
35-44	16.3%	1,475
45-54	21.4%	1,937
55-64	14.3%	1,291
65-74	9.2%	830
Total	**100%**	**9,037**

- The largest single reason that not-employed residents interested in employment are not working is that they are retired. This is followed by *unspecified other reasons* and *can't find a suitable job*. See Table 21.

TABLE 21: Reasons for Non-Employment among Residents Not in the Workforce* but Interested in Employment
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Reason Not Working	Percentage	Number
Lack of jobs in field	6.1%	551
Attending school	2.4%	220
Can't find a suitable job	19.5%	1,763
Raising a family	15.9%	1,433
Not looking for employment	0.0%	0
Retired	23.2%	2,094
Disabled	7.3%	661
Lack of transportation to work	4.9%	441
Laid off/company closure	0.0%	0
Other	20.7%	1,874
Total	**100%**	**9,037**

** Explains the reasons these residents are not working*

- The occupational skill base of the region's not-employed residents who are interested in working is moderately diverse. Table 22 outlines the largest occupational skill groups within this sector of the population. As shown, *construction, cleaning & maintenance, office & administrative support, customer services, childcare,* and *food preparation & serving* constitute the largest categories of skills, accounting for 15.3%, 9.2%, 8.4%, 6.9%, 6.1%, and 6.1%, respectively, of the not-employed-but-interested skills base.

TABLE 22: Leading Occupational Skills of Residents Not in the Workforce but Interested in Employment
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Occupational Skills	Percentage	Number
Construction	15.3%	1,380
Cleaning & Maintenance	9.2%	828
Office & Administrative Support	8.4%	759
Customer Services	6.9%	621
Childcare	6.1%	552
Food Preparation & Serving	6.1%	552

15. **A majority of the region's not-employed residents interested in employment would like to receive job training.** In total, 7,060 not-employed residents interested in working would like additional training. See Table 23. See Table 45 for those fields in which all residents would like to receive training. As shown in that table, the training most desired falls within three categories: *unspecified any/open*, *computer-general*, and *special trades*.

TABLE 23: Job Training Interest among Not-Employed Residents Interested in Employment
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Interest	Percentage	Number
Interested in job training	78.1%	7,060
Not interested in job training	21.9%	1,977
Total	100%	9,037

- Education levels among not-employed residents interested in working are slightly lower than average for the area, with approximately 73% of respondents reporting a high school diploma/GED or higher. (See Table 24)

TABLE 24: Educational Attainment of Not-Employed Residents Interested in Employment
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Highest Grade Level Completed	Percentage	Number
8th grade or lower	3.0%	274
Some high school	24.2%	2,191
High school graduate or equivalent	43.4%	3,925
Some technical or vocational school	2.0%	183
Technical/Vocational certificate	2.0%	183
Some college, no degree	15.2%	1,369
Associates degree	2.0%	183
Bachelors degree	5.1%	456
Postgraduate study, but no degree	0.0%	0
Graduate degree	3.0%	274
Professional degree	0.0%	0
Total	99.9%	9,038

16. **New and expanding employers also would rely heavily on another element of the hidden labor force: the region's already-employed residents, particularly the under-employed.** Approximately 5,096 (13.0%) currently employed residents are under-employed, i.e., qualified for better positions than they currently hold because of experience, training, or education. (Refer to the demographic profile on under-employed residents in Appendix C for additional details). As can be seen in Tables 25 and 26, the under-employed component of the workforce is relatively young and well educated.

- Among under-employed residents, 29.5% are under the age of 35, and 60.6% are between 35 and 54 years, indicating a pool of young and middle-aged workers who would welcome improved job opportunities. See Table 25.

TABLE 25: Age Distribution of Under-employed Residents
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Age	Percentage	Number
18-24	3.3%	167
25-34	26.2%	1,337
35-44	34.4%	1,754
45-54	26.2%	1,337
55-64	6.6%	334
65-74	3.3%	167
Total	**100%**	**5,096**

- The under-employed residents are relatively well educated. Approximately 82% have at least a high school diploma, while 37% have some post-secondary training less than a four-year degree. A relatively high 23.4% have a four-year college degree or higher. See Table 26.

TABLE 26: Educational Attainment of Under-employed Residents
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Highest Grade Level Completed	Percentage	Number
8th grade or lower	1.7%	85
Some high school	16.6%	849
High school graduate or equivalent	21.6%	1,104
Some technical or vocational school	6.7%	340
Some college, no degree	16.6%	849
Technical/Vocational certificate	6.7%	340
Associates degree	6.7%	340
Bachelors degree	15.0%	764
Postgraduate study, but no degree	1.7%	85
Graduate degree	5.0%	255
Professional degree	1.7%	85
Total	**100%**	**5,096**

- The occupational skill base of the region's under-employed residents is diverse. Table 27 outlines the largest occupational skill groups within this sector of the population. As shown, *healthcare-technical, construction, office & administrative support, manufacturing-skilled,* and *personal services* constitute the largest categories of skills, accounting for 11.7%, 8.3%, 8.3%, 6.7%, and 6.7% respectively, of the under-employed skills base.

TABLE 27: Leading Occupational Skills of Under-employed Residents
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Occupational Skills	Percentage	Number
Healthcare-Technical	11.7%	595
Construction	8.3%	425
Office & Administrative Support	8.3%	425
Manufacturing-Skilled	6.7%	340
Personal Services	6.7%	340

17. **Many of the region's employed residents would like to enhance their job skills through training.** Returns from Younger Associates' household survey show that 45.8% of employed residents would be interested in receiving training to acquire new job skills for career development, which amounts to roughly 17,935 residents (see Table 28). These individuals would offer a potential workforce for existing and new companies offering career advancement and training opportunities. Table 45 indicates those disciplines in which the employed would like to receive training. The four top fields in which training is desired are *computer-general*, *any/open*, *special trades*, and *manufacturing-skilled*. Almost all of these residents indicate that they would be willing to do this training on their own time and expense.

TABLE 28: Job Training Interest among Employed Residents
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Interest	Percentage	Number
Interested in job training	45.8%	17,935
Not interested in job training	54.2%	21,248
Total	**100%**	**39,183**

18. **In addition, a majority of the region's under-employed and not-employed residents would also like to acquire new job skills through training.** Results from Younger Associates' household survey show that 54.1% of under-employed residents (2,757) would be interested in receiving job training to enhance their job skills for career development (see Table 29). These residents would offer an additional potential workforce for existing and new companies offering career advancement and training. The four top fields in which training is desired are *computer-general, medical-related (except nursing), any/open,* and *special trade.*

- Most (78.1%) of the not-employed residents who want to work would like training to acquire new skills, which is equivalent to 7,060 residents. Almost all of these residents indicate that they would be willing to do this training on their own time and expense. The three leading categories in which they would like training are *general computer*, *special manufacturing trades*, and *anything* (i.e., they are open to any training that would give them improved job opportunities).

TABLE 29: Job Training Interest among Under-employed Residents
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Interest	Percentage	Number
Under-employed		
Interested in job training	54.1%	2,757
Not interested in job training	45.9%	2,339
Total	100%	5,096
Not employed but interested		
Interested in job training	78.1%	7,060
Not interested in job training	21.9%	1,977
Total	100%	9,037
Total	**100%**	**5,096**

19. **Approximately 5.5% of residents responding to the household survey are currently going to school for a degree or certificate, and about half expect to remain in the area after graduation.** Of those that are currently attending school for a degree or certificate, 50.5% report that they anticipate remaining in the area once they complete their education. This is a significant factor, as it is important for the region to retain its college graduates.

20. **Employed and not-employed but interested residents prefer to travel under 30 minutes for employment opportunities, whereas the under-employed residents interested in working will travel up to 60 minutes for employment opportunities.** Under-employed residents report an openness to commute up to twice as long as employed and not-employed but interested workers for job opportunities. See Table 30.

TABLE 30: Maximum Commute Times Desired by Not-Employed Residents Interested in Employment
Source: YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Maximum Commute Time	Prevailing Commute Pattern of the Employed		Maximum Desired Commute Times			
			Under-employed		Not Employed but Interested	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
Less than 15 minutes	40.8%	15,978	2.6%	131	24.5%	2,211
15-29 minutes	22.7%	8,913	25.6%	1,307	43.6%	3,942
30-44 minutes	17.0%	6,664	20.5%	1,045	19.1%	1,730
45-59 minutes	10.0%	3,934	20.5%	1,045	9.6%	865
1 hour to 1 hour, 29 minutes	2.0%	803	20.5%	1,045	2.1%	192
1 hour, 30 minutes or more	0.2%	80	5.1%	261	0.0%	0

Labor Demand

1. **WDG's employer survey shows that there is an overall projected increase of 5.2% in employment among the responding surveyed companies over the next year**. Among the 29 employers that responded to WDG's employer survey, 13 indicated that they will be increasing their workforce within a range of 1.6% to 87.5%. Most of the responding employers expect to remain stable, and only two expect to decrease their employment (each expect only a minor decrease of 1.2% to 1.3%, representing a decline of only 12 jobs on a payroll base of 917). Extrapolating this growth rate to the entire area workforce points to a regional growth of 3,000 new jobs in one year.
2. **Currently, the occupation in greatest demand by local employers that responded to the survey is the *engineering technician (general)* position, in which 84 workers are required in five responding firms.** This occupation is followed by production operators (65), unskilled laborers (manufacturing/repair) (48); machinery maintenance workers (31), engineers (25), carpenters (20), construction laborers (19), and industrial machinery mechanics (19).
    - Table 31 compares the occupations in greatest demand to their availability. A level of imbalance between availability and demand is shown for each occupation, as is the level of education or training needed for each occupation.
    - Comparing the current demand for workers against the current availability ratings indicates there are **existing critical labor shortages** for the following occupations: teachers (secondary), electrical and electronic repairers, industrial machinery mechanics, maintenance workers (machinery), and unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair). For these occupations, demand significantly exceeds availability.
    - Also indicated is a **general imbalance** between labor demand and supply for engineers, mechanical engineers, engineering technicians (general), construction laborers, electricians, registered nurses, assemblers/fabricators, welders, and truck drivers (heavy, tractor trailer). For these occupations, demand exceeds availability.
    - Additionally, there is a **modest imbalance** for the following occupations: electrical and electronic engineers, industrial engineers, computer software engineers, teachers (elementary), and customer service representatives. For these occupations, demand slightly exceeds availability.

TABLE 31: Top Occupations/Positions Currently in Demand by Responding Surveyed Local Employers

Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008

(X=modest imbalance; XX=imbalance; XXX=high imbalance)

Current Labor Demand	Demand		Supply Rating (5=plentiful; 1=unavailable)			Level of Education or Training Needed (2)
	Employer Responses (1)	# of Required Applicants	Average Score	Median Score	Imbalance*	
Architecture and Engineering						
Associate engineers (2-year degree)	-	-	2.1	2.0	-	Associates Degree
Engineers	7	25	2.2	2.0	XX	Bachelors Degree
Engineers, electric and electronic	4	7	2.1	2.0	X	Bachelors Degree
Engineers, industrial	2	7	1.8	1.5	X	Bachelors Degree
Engineers, mechanical	7	15	2.2	2.0	XX	Bachelors Degree
Technicians (general)	5	84	3.0	3.0	XX	Associates Degree
Business and Financial						
Accountants	-	-	3.2	3.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Financial analysts	-	-	3.3	4.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Sales representatives	3	14	3.3	4.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Computer and Mathematical						
Computer programmers	-	-	3.3	3.5	-	Bachelors Degree
Computer security specialists	-	-	3.5	3.5	-	N/A
Computer software engineers	-	-	3.6	4.0	X	Bachelors Degree
Computer systems analysts	-	-	3.6	4.0		Bachelors Degree
Computer systems engineers/architects	-	-	3.5	3.5		Bachelors Degree
Database administrators	-	-	3.2	3.0		Bachelors Degree
Network and computer systems administrators	2	2	3.3	3.0		Bachelors Degree
Network designers	-	-	3.5	3.5		N/A
Web administrators	-	-	2.9	3.0	-	N/A
Web developers	-	-	3.2	3.0	-	N/A
Construction and Extraction						
Brickmasons and blockmasons	-	-	2.5	2.5	-	Long on-the-job training
Carpenters	2	20	3.4	4.0	-	Long on-the-job training
Construction laborers	3	19	2.6	2.0	XX	Moderate on-the-job training
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	-	-	1.5	1.5	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Electricians	4	10	2.4	2.0	XX	Long on-the-job training
Painters, construction and maintenance	2	3	2.4	3.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	2	4	2.0	2.0	-	Long on-the-job training
Education						
Teachers, elementary	1	5	2.5	2.5	X	Bachelors Degree
Teachers, secondary	1	10	1.5	1.5	XXX	Bachelors Degree
Teachers, special education	1	1	1.5	1.5	-	Bachelors Degree
Teachers, post-secondary	1	2	2.0	2.0	-	Doctoral Degree
Teachers assistants	1	2	2.0	2.0	-	Short on-the-job training

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 31 *(continued)*: Top Occupations/Positions Currently in Demand by Responding Surveyed Local Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008
(X=modest imbalance; XX=imbalance; XXX=high imbalance)

Current Labor Demand	Demand		Supply Rating (5=plentiful; 1=unavailable)			Level of Education or Training Needed (2)
	Employer Responses	# of Required Applicants	Average Score	Median Score	Imbalance*	
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical						
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Diagnostic medical sonographers	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	1	2	2.0	2.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners, all other	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	-	-	3.0	3.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Medical records and health information technicians	1	1	1.5	1.5	-	Associates Degree
Occupational therapists	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Masters Degree
Physical therapists	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Masters Degree
Physician assistants	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Radiologic technologists and technicians	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Registered nurses	1	10	2.7	2.0	XX	Associates Degree
Respiratory therapists	1	1	1.5	1.5	-	Associates Degree
Healthcare Support						
Home health aides	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Short on-the-job training
Medical assistants	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair						
Electrical and electronic repairers	5	18	1.7	1.0	XXX	Postsecondary vocational award
Industrial machinery mechanics	4	19	1.9	2.0	XXX	Long on-the-job training
Maintenance workers, machinery	12	31	2.4	2.0	XXX	Short on-the-job training
Unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair)	10	48	2.5	2.0	XXX	N/A
Life Sciences						
Chemists	2	5	3.0	3.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Clinical data managers	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	N/A
Medical scientists	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Doctoral Degree
Management						
Computer and information systems managers	1	2	2.5	2.5	-	Bachelors plus Experience
Engineering managers	-	-	1.8	1.0	-	Bachelors plus Experience
Industrial production managers	1	2	1.6	2.0	-	Work experience in related occupation
Office and Administrative Support						
Computer support specialists (tech support)	1	1	2.5	2.5	-	Associates degree
Customer service representatives	3	8	2.5	3.0	X	Moderate on-the-job training

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 31 *(continued)*: Top Occupations/Positions Currently in Demand by Responding Surveyed Local Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008
(X=modest imbalance; XX=imbalance; XXX=high imbalance)

Current Labor Demand	Demand		Supply Rating (5=plentiful; 1=unavailable)			Level of Education or Training Needed (2)
	Employer Responses	# of Required Applicants	Average Score	Median Score	Imbalance*	
Production						
Assemblers and fabricators	1	4	2.3	2.3	XX	Short on-the-job training
Bindery workers	-	-	2.0	2.0	-	Short on-the-job training
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, metal	1	3	2.0	2.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, plastic	-	-	2.0	2.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Inspectors	-	-	3.3	3.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Instrumentation technicians	2	3	2.6	2.0	-	N/A
Machinists	2	2	2.5	2.0	-	Long on-the-job training
Prepress technicians and workers (electronic)	1	1	3.0	3.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Production operators	5	65	3.3	4.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Team assemblers	-	-	2.0	2.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Testers	-	-	1.5	1.5	-	N/A
Welders	4	10	2.2	2.0	XX	Long on-the-job training
Transportation and Material Moving						
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor trailer	4	17	2.3	2.3	XX	Moderate on-the-job training

*Degree of Imbalance	Applicants Required	Average Score	Median Score
X = Modest Imbalance	100+	3.5-4.0	3.5-4.0
	30-99	3.0-3.4	3.0-3.5
	10-29	2.5-2.9	2.5-3.0
	3-9	2.4 or less	2.5 or less
XX = Imbalance	100+	3.0-3.4	3.0-3.5
	30-99	2.6-2.9	2.5-3.0
	10-29	2.1-2.4	2.0-2.5
XXX = High Imbalance	100+	2.9 or less	3.0 or less
	30-99	2.5 or less	2.5 or less
	10-29	2.0 or less	2.0 or less

(1) Among survey responding employees. The actual total number needed would be higher.
(2)Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

3. **In one year, there will continue to be a demand for a variety of the occupations surveyed.** Occupations in high demand include: production operators (111), engineering technicians (general) (102), unskilled laborers (manufacturing/repair) (77), machinery maintenance mechanics (57), engineers (45), truck drivers (heavy and tractor trailer) (32), electrical and electronic repairers (26), construction laborers (24), carpenters (20), and industrial machinery mechanics (19), among others. The anticipated occupational demands are presented in Table 32 below. The anticipated occupational demand in three years will follow the same pattern and approximate the same numbers as those for one year (see Exhibit A-10 in the Appendix).
   - Comparing the twelve-month demand for workers against the current employer-reported workforce availability ratings indicates **critical labor shortages** for the following occupations: engineers, electrical and electronic repairers, industrial machinery mechanics, maintenance workers (machinery), unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair), and truck drivers (heavy, tractor trailer).

- Also indicated is a **general imbalance** between labor demand and supply for the following occupations: industrial engineers, mechanical engineers, engineering technicians (general), construction laborers, electricians, and registered nurses.
- There is also a **modest imbalance** for a variety of occupations including: electrical and electronic engineers, teachers (elementary, secondary, special education, and post-secondary), industrial production managers, assemblers/fabricators, computer-controlled-machine-tool operators (metal), instrumentation technicians, and production operators.

TABLE 32: Anticipated Demand for Workers in One Year by Responding Surveyed Local Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008
(X=modest imbalance; XX=imbalance; XXX=high imbalance)

Current Labor Demand	Demand		Supply Rating (5=plentiful; 1=unavailable)			Level of Education or Training Needed (2)
	Employer Responses (1)	# of Required Applicants	Average Score	Median Score	Imbalance*	
Architecture and Engineering						
Associate engineers (2-year degree)	-	-	2.1	2.0	-	Associates Degree
Engineers	7	45	2.2	2.0	XXX	Bachelors Degree
Engineers, electric and electronic	4	7	2.1	2.0	X	Bachelors Degree
Engineers, industrial	3	8	1.8	1.5	XX	Bachelors Degree
Engineers, mechanical	6	14	2.2	2.0	XX	Bachelors Degree
Technicians (general)	7	102	3.0	3.0	XX	Associates Degree
Business and Financial						
Accountants	3	3	3.2	3.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Financial analysts	3	3	3.3	4.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Sales representatives	5	16	3.3	4.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Computer and Mathematical						
Computer programmers	1	1	3.3	3.5	-	Bachelors Degree
Computer security specialists	-	-	3.5	3.5	-	N/A
Computer software engineers	-	-	3.6	4.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Computer systems analysts	-	-	3.6	4.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Computer systems engineers/architects	-	-	3.5	3.5	-	Bachelors Degree
Database administrators	2	3	3.2	3.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Network and computer systems administrators	2	2	3.3	3.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Network designers	-	-	3.5	3.5	-	Bachelors Degree
Web administrators	2	2	2.9	3.0	-	N/A
Web developers	-	-	3.2	3.0	-	N/A
Construction and Extraction						
Brickmasons and blockmasons	-	-	2.5	2.5	-	Long on-the-job training
Carpenters	2	20	3.4	4.0	-	Long on-the-job training
Construction laborers	3	24	2.6	2.0	XX	Moderate on-the-job training
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	-	-	1.5	1.5	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Electricians	5	11	2.4	2.0	XX	Long on-the-job training
Painters, construction and maintenance	1	2	2.4	3.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	2	3	2.0	2.0	-	Long on-the-job training

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 32 *(continued)*: Anticipated Demand for Workers in One Year by Responding Surveyed Local Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008
(X=modest imbalance; XX=imbalance; XXX=high imbalance)

Current Labor Demand	Demand		Supply Rating (5=plentiful; 1=unavailable)			Level of Education or Training Needed (2)
	Employer Responses (1)	# of Required Applicants	Average Score	Median Score	Imbalance*	
Education						
Teachers, elementary	1	7	2.5	2.5	X	Bachelors Degree
Teachers, secondary	1	5	1.5	1.5	X	Bachelors Degree
Teachers, special education	1	5	1.5	1.5	X	Bachelors Degree
Teachers, post-secondary	1	3	2.0	2.0	X	Doctoral Degree
Teachers assistants	1	2	2.0	2.0	-	Short on-the-job training
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical						
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Diagnostic medical sonographers	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	1	2	2.0	2.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners, all other	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	-	-	3.0	3.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Medical records and health information technicians	-	-	1.5	1.5	-	Associates Degree
Occupational therapists	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Masters Degree
Physical therapists	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Masters Degree
Physician assistants	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Radiologic technologists and technicians	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Associates Degree
Registered nurses	1	10	2.7	2.0	XX	Associates Degree
Respiratory therapists	1	1	1.5	1.5	-	Associates Degree
Healthcare Support						
Home health aides	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Short on-the-job training
Medical assistants	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair						
Electrical and electronic repairers	6	26	1.7	1.0	XXX	Postsecondary vocational award
Industrial machinery mechanics	3	19	1.9	2.0	XXX	Long on-the-job training
Maintenance workers, machinery	11	57	2.4	2.0	XXX	Short on-the-job training
Unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair)	8	77	2.5	2.0	XXX	N/A
Life Sciences						
Chemists	2	7	3.0	3.0	-	Bachelors Degree
Clinical data managers	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	N/A
Medical scientists	-	-	1.0	1.0	-	Doctoral Degree
Management						
Computer and information systems managers	2	3	2.5	2.5	-	Bachelors plus Experience
Engineering managers	1	1	1.8	1.0	-	Bachelors plus Experience
Industrial production managers	3	6	1.6	2.0	X	Work experience in related occupation

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 32 *(continued)*: Anticipated Demand for Workers in One Year by Responding Surveyed Local Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008
(X=modest imbalance; XX=imbalance; XXX=high imbalance)

Current Labor Demand	Demand		Supply Rating (5=plentiful; 1=unavailable)			Level of Education or Training Needed (2)
	Employer Responses (1)	# of Required Applicants	Average Score	Median Score	Imbalance*	
Office and Administrative Support						
Computer support specialists (tech support)	-	-	2.5	2.5	-	Associates Degree
Customer service representatives	5	7	2.5	3.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Production						
Assemblers and fabricators	1	4	2.3	2.0	X	Short on-the-job training
Bindery workers	-	-	2.0	2.0	-	Short on-the-job training
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, metal	1	3	2.0	2.0	X	Moderate on-the-job training
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, plastic	-	-	2.0	2.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Inspectors	1	2	3.3	3.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Instrumentation technicians	2	8	2.6	2.0	X	N/A
Machinists	3	7	2.5	2.0	-	Long on-the-job training
Prepress technicians and workers (electronic)	1	1	3.0	3.0	-	Postsecondary vocational award
Production operators	7	111	3.3	4.0	X	Moderate on-the-job training
Team assemblers	-	-	2.0	2.0	-	Moderate on-the-job training
Testers	-	-	1.5	1.5	-	N/A
Welders	4	9	2.2	2.0	-	Long on-the-job training
Transportation and Material Moving						
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor trailer	4	32	2.3	2.0	XXX	Moderate on-the-job training

*Degree of Imbalance	Applicants Required	Average Score	Median Score
X = Modest Imbalance	100+	3.5-4.0	3.5-4.0
	30-99	3.0-3.4	3.0-3.5
	10-29	2.5-2.9	2.5-3.0
	3-9	2.4 or less	2.5 or less
XX = Imbalance	100+	3.0-3.4	3.0-3.5
	30-99	2.6-2.9	2.5-3.0
	10-29	2.1-2.4	2.0-2.5
XXX = High Imbalance	100+	2.9 or less	3.0 or less
	30-99	2.5 or less	2.5 or less
	10-29	2.0 or less	2.0 or less

(1) Among survey responding employees. The actual total number needed would be higher.
(2)Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

4. **Residents captured by the WDG/YA survey desire training or have experience in several of the occupational fields in which there is an imbalance (high and general imbalances) between demand and supply**. This favorable situation means that there is a potential workforce residing within the area that could be recruited or trained/retrained in those skill areas where there will be supply constraints. Table 33 indicates the occupations for which demand will exceed availability in one year and the number of residents in the area that have a background in those occupations or have a desire to be trained. It also shows the level of training needed in each occupation, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

TABLE 33: Surveyed Employer Twelve-Month Labor Demand and Hidden Labor Force Supply
Source: WDG Employer Surveys, Spring 2008; YA Household Survey, Spring 2008

Occupations in Supply/Demand Imbalance in Twelve Months	Number of Required Applicants (1)	Number of Residents with Previous or Current Work Experience		Number of Residents with Desire for Training		Most Significant Source of Postsecondary Education or Training (2)
		Not Employed but Interested	Under-employed Area Specialized Training	Not Employed but Interested	All Employed, Including Under-employed	
High Imbalance (XXX)						
Engineers	45	69	254	N/A	N/A	Bachelors Degree
Electrical and electronic repairers	26	503	251	77	206	Postsecondary vocational award
Industrial machinery mechanics	19	822	758	614	2,050	Long on-the-job training
Maintenance workers, machinery	57	822	758	614	2,050	Short on-the-job training
Unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair)	77	777	84	N/A	N/A	N/A
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor trailer	32	824	589	153	410	Moderate on-the-job training
General Imbalance (XX)						
Engineers, industrial	8	69	254	N/A	N/A	Bachelors Degree
Engineers, mechanical	14	69	254	N/A	N/A	Bachelors Degree
Technicians (general)	102	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Associates Degree
Construction laborers	24	1,460	843	153	344	Moderate on-the-job training
Electricians	11	1,460	843	153	344	Moderate on-the-job training
Registered nurses	10	483	679	307	1,440	Associates Degree

(1) Among survey responding employees. The actual total number needed would be higher.

(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

5. **To maintain and attract knowledge-based and technology-focused industries, the region must be able to provide the requisite skill sets.** The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics identified the technology-based skills that will be in the greatest demand in the country between 2004 and 2014. (See Table 34). It is important, therefore, for the region to have these skill sets over the next six years to attract more technology- and skills-based operations to the region.

TABLE 34: Top U.S. Technical Occupations by Rate of Projected Growth 2004-2014
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers

Occupation	U.S. Change		Most Significant Source of Post-Secondary Education or Training
	Number (000's)	Percent	
Network systems & data communications analysis	126	54.6%	Bachelor's degree
Computer software engineers, applications	222	48.4%	Bachelor's degree
Computer software engineers, systems software	146	43.0%	Bachelor's degree
Network & computer systems administrators	107	38.4%	Bachelor's degree
Database administrators	40	38.2%	Bachelor's degree
Computer systems analysts	153	31.4%	Bachelor's degree
Biomedical engineers	3	30.7%	Bachelor's degree
Environmental engineers	15	30.0%	Bachelor's degree
Personal financial advisors	41	25.9%	Bachelor's degree
Actuaries	4	23.2%	Bachelor's degree or higher, plus work experience
Accountants and auditors	264	22.4%	Bachelor's degree
Financial analysts	34	17.3%	Bachelor's degree
Engineers, all	195	13.4%	Bachelor's degree or higher
Engineering managers	25	13.0%	Bachelor's degree or higher, plus work experience
Architects & engineers	315	12.5%	Bachelor's degree or higher
Electrical engineers	18	11.8%	Bachelor's degree
Computer hardware engineers	8	10.1%	Bachelor's degree
Electronics engineers, except computer	14	9.7%	Bachelor's degree

6. **Non-technically-focused occupations also will be needed locally to meet the needs of a growth economy.** According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, many occupations will be in high demand by general industry between 2004 and 2014. Although not all of these may be needed as strongly in the area, many will be. It is the challenge of the area to provide the training needed for such skills to sustain general economic growth. These occupations are listed in Tables 35 and 36, and can be used to supplement the data gathered from the WDG/YA surveys. They are listed by the fastest growing and those that are forecasted to grow the most numerically. Interestingly, most of the high-growth jobs require only a high school diploma or up to two years of post-secondary education.

TABLE 35: Fastest-Growing U.S. Occupations by Rate of Projected Growth 2004-2014
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupation	U.S. Change 2004-2014		Most Significant Source of Post-Secondary Education or Training
	Number (000's)	Percent	
Home health aides	350	56.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Network systems and data communications analysts	126	55.0%	Bachelor's degree
Medical assistants	202	52.0%	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Physician assistants	31	50.0%	Bachelor's degree
Computer software engineers, applications	222	48.0%	Bachelor's degree
Physical therapist assistants	26	44.0%	Associate degree
Dental hygienists	68	43.0%	Associate degree

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 35 *(continued)*: Fastest-Growing U.S. Occupations by Rate of Projected Growth 2004-2014
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupation	U.S. Change 2004-2014		Most Significant Source of Post-Secondary Education or Training
	Number (000's)	Percent	
Dental hygienists	68	43.0%	Associate degree
Computer software engineers, systems software	146	43.0%	Bachelor's degree
Dental assistants	114	43.0%	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Personal and home care aides	287	41.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Network and computer systems administrators	107	38.4%	Bachelor's degree
Database administrators	40	38.2%	Bachelor's degree
Physical therapists	57	36.7%	Master's degree
Forensic science technicians	4	36.4%	Associate degree
Veterinary technologists and technicians	21	35.3%	Associate degree
Diagnostic medical sonographers	15	34.8%	Associate degree
Physical therapist aides	15	34.4%	Short-term on-the-job training
Occupational therapist assistants	7	34.1%	Associate degree
Medical scientists, except epidemiologists	25	34.1%	Doctoral degree
Occupational therapists	31	33.6%	Master's degree

TABLE 36: Fastest-Growing U.S. Occupations by Numeric Increase 2004-2014
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupation	U.S. Change		Most Significant Source of Post-Secondary Education or Training
	Number (000's)	Percent	
Retail salespersons	736	17.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Registered nurses	703	29.0%	Associate degree
Postsecondary teachers	524	32.0%	Doctoral degree
Customer service representatives	471	23.0%	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	440	19.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Waiters and waitresses	376	17.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Combined food preparation and serving workers, incl. fast food	367	17.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Home health aides	350	56.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	325	22.0%	Postsecondary vocational award
General and operations managers	308	17.0%	Bachelor's degree or higher, plus work experience
Personal and home care aides	287	41.0%	Short-term on-the-job training
Elementary school teachers, except special education	265	18.2%	Bachelor's degree
Accountants and auditors	264	22.4%	Bachelor's degree
Office clerks, general	263	8.4%	Short-term on-the-job training
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	248	10.2%	Short-term on-the-job training
Receptionists and information clerks	246	21.7%	Short-term on-the-job training
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	230	19.5%	Short-term on-the-job training
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer	223	12.9%	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Computer software engineers, applications	222	48.4%	Bachelor's degree
Maintenance and repair workers, general	202	15.2%	Moderate-term on-the-job training

Labor Availability and Demand: Contractors' Experiences

WDG conducted telephone interviews with nine representative firms that provide contract services to area companies with large facilities in the River Parishes, such as Monsanto, Shell Chemical, Motiva, Marathon, Dow Chemical, Valero, Conoco, and Entergy in the St. Charles and St. John Parishes. These interviews were to determine how major area contractors view the three river parishes' labor market.

The interviewed contractors provide a range of services including industrial maintenance, construction, civil engineering, electrical and instrumentation maintenance, HVAC, fugitive emissions monitoring, industrial painting, and equipment rental. The nine companies interviewed were Zachry Industrial Services, J. E. Merit, Turner Industries, The Cajun Company, Star Service, Environmental Analytics, Protherm, and RSC.

1. **The WDG-interviewed companies report minimal hiring from the local River Parishes labor market due to limited availability of employment candidates.** Two of the interviewees said they routinely recruit from the Baton Rouge labor market. Out-of-state recruiting is also quite prevalent. All companies recruiting employees from outside the River Parishes pay a travel per diem, which they indicated is a common practice in the labor market.

2. **Current rating of overall availability of employment candidates in the River Parishes is rated as fair.** On a five-point scale where 5=plentiful, 4=good, 3=satisfactory, 2=fair, 1=unavailable, interviewed contractors provided ratings that ranged from good (4) to fair (2) to unavailable (1.5), for an average rating of fair (2).
    - The company that rated the labor market as good (4) is small, having only four employees, all of whom are delivery drivers.

3. **Skilled trades such as combination welders, pipefitters, heavy-equipment operators, and HVAC are among the most difficult to recruit in the River Parishes labor market.** Ratings ranged from fair (2) to unavailable (1), for an average rating of fair (2). One interviewee commented that the local labor force is not as qualified as it used to be and that experience levels are low.

4. **Many of the interviewed companies report a satisfactory supply of laborers and helpers, resulting in a satisfactory (3) rating.**

5. **Interviewed contractors forecast that labor availability will not improve over the next three to five years and beyond.** Ratings ranged from satisfactory (3) to fair (2) to unavailable (1.5), for an average rating of fair (2). All interviewed companies indicated they anticipate shortages across all skill sets and occupations due to an aging work force and growing labor demand fueled by new construction, which is projected to continue through 2012.
    - All interviewed companies stated activity levels are rising across the Gulf Coast, competition for labor continues to increase, and what little surplus might still exist will soon be absorbed. There is a widespread feeling that there will be a huge shortage of skilled labor over the next five to ten years, with no emerging work force to meet this need. On a positive note, one interviewee mentioned that the Hispanic workforce presence in the region is growing and might offer small amount of relief.

6. **Interviewed contractors rate the applicability of Louisiana Technical College's curricula and skills of its graduates as satisfactory.** Ratings ranged from excellent (5) to satisfactory to fair (2.5) for an average rating of satisfactory (3).
    - Various campuses of the Louisiana Technical College (LTC) and Louisiana Community College system were mentioned by interviewed contractors as doing an exemplary job in training students. Many of the interviewed contractors use the Technical College/Association of Builders & Contractors construction trades training programs for both pre- and post-employment training.

7. **The need for more skilled crafts curricula was voiced by a number of the interviewees.** The need to improve the quality of the instructors at LTC was cited by interviewed contractors, as some instructors are considered out of touch with current technologies. It also was felt that graduates often lack needed hands-on experience.

8. **Interviewed contractors generally think there is a need to increase funding of training programs in the region and the state.** Interviewees frequently noted a need to concentrate efforts in the high schools to change the mind-set of high school students in favor of pursing a career in the technical trades.
    - One interviewee suggested developing programs to train the unemployed to become employable, focusing on basic skills.

Workforce Trends

WDG used data from its employer survey, industry-generated data, and the results of Workforce Alliance's focus groups and surveys to identify the expected and forecasted labor demands within RREDI's target industries. RREDI has four target sectors containing 12 specific target industries as follows:

1. Sector 1: Office Sector Target: Administrative and Back Offices (NAICS 56111)
    - Data processing
    - Claims processing
    - Subscription processing
    - Call centers
    - Technology support
    - Customer service
    - Reservations
    - Catalog fulfillment
    - Occupational categories
2. Sector 2: Service Sector Target: Commercial and Industrial Machinery Repair and Maintenance (NAICS 81131)
3. Sector 3: Manufacturing Sector Targets
    - All Other Chemical Product Manufacturing (NAICS 32599)

- Metal Tank Manufacturing (NAICS 33242)
- Pump and Compressor Manufacturing (NAICS 33391)
- Navigational, Measurement, Electronic, and Control Instrument Manufacturing
- Other Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (NAICS 33699)

4. Niche Target Opportunities (NAICS codes are not available for the niche targets)
   - Import Distribution Centers including Trans-loading Operations
   - Bimodal Terminals
   - Inland Intermodal Container Yards
   - Cellulosic Ethanol
   - Syngas and Biorefining

The existing base of companies in the River Parishes within RREDI's target industries is small. Consequently, the number of employer-survey returns received by WDG from companies within the target sectors was small and the distribution among the targets was narrow. Only eight surveys were returned within just two of the manufacturing-sector targets (seven in the "All Other Chemical Products" Manufacturing Sector and one in the "Pump and Compressor Manufacturing" Sector). Nevertheless, a summary of the findings from these surveys was created and reviewed by WDG for demand trends. This summary is included within the Appendix as Exhibit E.

Although no surveys were returned from employers within the administrative and back office target, there was sufficient response from employers of office skills within the full survey that observations can be made on anticipated occupational and demand trends for office employers.

The results from the survey show the following trends.

1. **Basic skills are very important to the surveyed employers within the targeted manufacturing industries.** Employers within the targeted manufacturing sectors that responded to the survey showed a higher need for basic skills among job applicants than among the rest of the surveyed employers, and the basic skills of applicants were rated higher. Basic skills, though rated higher than among the rest of the employers, are still rated as borderline unsatisfactory
2. **It is more difficult to recruit professionals and management personnel than it is among the area's other employers.** The employers in the targeted manufacturing sectors rated recruiting as "fair" (2.0) on a five-point scale where 5=excellent and 1=poor. Difficulties in employment opportunities among "trailing" spouses is the key recruiting deterrent, but the perceived quality of life and the quality of schools were also factors adversely affecting recruitment.
3. **The productivity and work ethic of employees are rated higher than among the non-targeted employers.**
4. **The percentage of employees eligible to retire within five years is significantly higher than among the area's total employer base.** The survey response shows that an average of 22.2% and a median of 25% of current employees of target-industry employers will be retirement-ready within the next five years, compared to an average of 12.9% and a median of 10.0% among all surveyed employers. Fortunately, employers feel confident in their ability to replace the retiring employees. Engineers and assemblers are the leading occupations to be affected by retirement.

5. **Workforce Alliance data shows that Boomer retirements have begun, leading to higher employee turnover.** Employers are using this period of higher turnover as an opportunity to retool the desired competency mix of their workforce. The desired skill mix is shifting toward a higher value of relational skills versus strictly technical skills.
6. **The greatest current demand, and the greatest anticipated demand in one and three years, is for engineers and for maintenance and production operator skills.** The skills that are currently the most difficult to recruit include chemical engineers, process technology technicians, welders, millwrights, and instrumentation technicians.
7. **Employers work frequently with Louisiana Technical College and the area high schools.** The average rating for use of LTC was 4.0 and the median rating was 5.0, where 5=continuous use and 1=never used.
   - LSU and LTC are the educational institutions used most frequently by area employers within the targeted sectors.
8. **Quality-of-life ratings are lower among the employers in the targeted sectors than among the other employers.** Lower ratings were given in availability of housing, childcare, and healthcare services, and in safety from crime and traffic and road congestion.
9. **Office employers rate the current availability of most office skills as satisfactory to good, while the anticipated growth in jobs is minor.** The availability of computer support specialists and customer service representatives, however, is rated as tight.

WDG was only able to research the labor-force trends among the targets with NAICS industry codes, because consistent and reliable labor forecasts are offered for NAICS-coded businesses, and are not available where the codes are not offered. Forecasts could not be generated for any of the Niche Target Opportunities, because they have no associated NAICS codes.

TABLE 37: Target Industry Employment Change in Louisiana's Regional Labor Market 2004-2014 *
Source: Louisiana Department of Labor

NAICS	Target Sector	Industry Title	2004 Annual Average Employment	2014 Projected Employment	Employment Change 2004 - 2014	Percent Change 2004 - 2014	
						Regional Labor Market	U.S. Average
-	-	All Industries	652,849	558,381	-94,468	-14.5%	1.3%
811	Service	Repair and maintenance	5,789	4,238	-1,551	-26.8%	14.7%
561	Office	Administrative and support services	35,143	26,685	-8,458	-24.1%	31.2%
325	Manufacturing	Chemical manufacturing	5,738	5,003	-735	-12.8%	-1.1%
332	Manufacturing	Fabricated metal product manufacturing	2,403	1,510	-893	-37.2%	-1.8%
333	Manufacturing	Machinery manufacturing	2,244	830	-1,414	-63.0%	-12.8%
334	Manufacturing	Computer and electronic product manufacturing	817	373	-444	-54.3%	-7.1%
336	Manufacturing	Transportation equipment manufacturing	11,399	10,835	-564	-4.9%	5.4%
	Total Target Sectors		63,533	49,474	-14,059	-22.1%	15.3%

*Regional Labor Market Area 1: *Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, & St. Tammany Parishes*

Labor Quality

1. **Employers report that the level of basic skills seen among job applicants ranges between borderline-satisfactory to slightly-higher-than-satisfactory, depending upon the skill.** As seen in Table 38, the *median* score (on a five-point scale where 1=poor and 5=excellent) for six of the seven basic skills included in the WDG employer survey was 3.0 (i.e., satisfactory). The only skill receiving a 2.0 rating was math.
   - The *average* ratings, however, indicate that employers in the region view team and cooperative skills as slightly better than satisfactory. Meanwhile, all other skills are seen as slightly unsatisfactory (average score of 2.5 to 2.9).
2. **Surveyed employers report satisfactory-to-good work ethic and productivity among their employees.** Workforce-quality ratings ranged from satisfactory to good. Willingness to work overtime and overall employer/employee relations received the highest ratings (median score of 4.0 and average score of 3.6). (See Table 38).

TABLE 38: Employer Ratings on Labor-Quality Measures
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008 (1=Poor; 5=Excellent)

Basic Skills of Job Applicants	Average	Median
Overall basic skills of all applicants	2.9	3.0
Written communication	2.6	3.0
Reading comprehension	2.7	3.0
Math	2.5	2.0
Thinking and judgment/problem solving	2.8	3.0
Verbal communication/comprehension	2.7	3.0
Team and cooperative skills	3.1	3.0
Productivity and Work Ethic of Employees		
Work ethic	3.1	3.0
Productivity	3.2	3.0
Productivity compared to that of company's other sites	3.4	3.0
Willingness to work overtime	3.6	4.0
Punctuality	3.1	3.0
Overall employer/employee relations	3.6	4.0

3. **Turnover rates for newly hired workers and for employees after the first year are at parity with rates typically seen by WDG in similarly sized communities.** The employer-reported average turnover rate for new hires ranges from 0% to 10%, and the average turnover rate for workers after the first year of employment is between 6% and 9%. The average daily absenteeism rate for responding employers is between 0% and 5%. Refer to Exhibit B-1 in the Appendix.

Education and Training

1. **The River Parishes region has limited resources when it comes to post-secondary education.** The region is home to two less-than-four-year institutions and one four-year institution. In 2006, these institutions combined had 2,197 enrollees and graduated 230 students. In Louisiana, community colleges serve those students seeking to get a two-year college degree in preparation for admission to a four-year college or university, or for a two-year associate's degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences. The Louisiana Technical College (LTC) System, meanwhile, has numerous campuses across the state. These campuses offer two-year associate's degrees and one-to-two-year certificates in a variety of industrial, instrumentation, and other career technologies (Refer to Table 39 and Exhibits D-9 and D-10). Meanwhile, nearby Baton Rouge (56 miles to the northwest from LaPlace in St. John the Baptist Parish) is home to Louisiana State University, and New Orleans (31 miles to the southeast from LaPlace) hosts Tulane University, Loyola University, the University of New Orleans, and Xavier University.

TABLE 39: Graduation and Enrollment at Regional Post-Secondary Schools
Source: U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS

Less-than-Four-Year Institutions	City	Total Fall Enrollment (2006)	Total Graduates (2006)
Louisiana Technical College-River Parishes	Reserve	599	89
River Parishes Community College	Sorrento	1,125	58
Total Two-Year Institutions		*1,724*	*147*
Four-or-More-Year Institutions	**City**	**Total Fall Enrollment (2005)**	**Total Graduates (2005)**
ITT Technical Institute	Saint Rose	473	83
Total Four-or-more-Year Institutions:		*473*	*83*
Grand Total		***2,197***	***230***

2. **Responding employers report that they frequently work with the local campus of LTC, but infrequently or never work with River Parishes Community College for training programs, apprenticeships, co-ops, and other programs.** Such a split is expected, since the focus of LTC is training students for industrial and office careers for area companies. The frequency rating for LTC is higher than what is typically seen by WDG across the country in similar ratings. (Refer to Table 40).
   - Many of the region's employers work actively with LTC in course and program design, contribute equipment, and work with the school in co-ops and other programs.
   - Currently, 43% of companies responding to WDG's survey are using co-ops, apprenticeships, internships, or similar programs, which is much higher than what WDG sees in most of the areas it studies.
   - Of survey respondents, 34.2% report that their training needs are not met locally. Skills training is not locally met for the following occupations or skills: electrical and millwright training; GBRIMA and BNOIC safety training; janitorial work; LPV IV certification; critical-care nursing certification; marine-vessel captains and engineers; non-destructive testing certification; nuclear operator and nuclear trainers; OSHA certification; roofing applications; and vending-machine mechanics.

TABLE 40: Employer Ratings of Utilization Frequency of Training Programs from Regional Training Providers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008

Institution	Responses	*(1=Never; 5=Continuously)*	
		Average Score	Median Score
Area high schools	34	2.7	3.0
River Parishes Community College	35	1.9	1.0
Louisiana Technical College	35	2.9	3.0
Private vendors (e.g., training and development consultants	33	2.4	2.0

3. **Employers responding to WDG's survey with knowledge of the graduates from and programs at the region's educational institutions rate both as satisfactory to very good.** The quality ratings are presented below in Table 41. River Parishes Community College and Louisiana Technical College were the highest-rated institutions in the region.

   - Despite the high quality ratings, several employers indicate that the region's high schools and post-secondary educational institutions need to improve student performance in basic skills, math, job preparedness, work ethic, and communication/speaking, among others. The needed improvements are listed in Exhibit B-1, Appendix B.

TABLE 41: Employer Ratings of the Quality of Graduates and Programs from Regional Educational Institutions
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008

Institution	Responses	*(1=Poor; 5=Excellent)*	
		Average Score	Median Score
Area high schools	36	3.0	3.0
River Parishes Community College	35	3.6	4.0
Louisiana Technical College	37	3.5	4.0
Private vendors (e.g., training and development consultants)	35	3.3	3.0

4. **The full-time graduation rates for post-secondary institutions in a multi-parish region for which graduation and retention data were available range from 9% (Louisiana Technical College) to 42% (ITT Technical College).** River Parishes Community College's full-time graduation rates are low because many of its students are part-time and are not counted as full-time students at graduation.

TABLE 42: Retention and Graduation Rates at Regional Post-Secondary Schools, 2006
Source: U.S. Department of Education, IPEDS

Less-than-Four-Year Institutions	Retention Rate*		Graduation Rate**		
	FT	PT	FT Total	Male	Female
Louisiana Technical College-River Parishes	44%	34%	35%	31%	45%
River Parishes Community College	41%	28%	9%	2%	13%
Four-or-More-Year Institutions					
ITT Technical College	N/A	45%	42%	43%	N/A

* *Retention rates measure the percentage of entering students who continue their studies the following fall.*

** *The graduation rate is the percentage of students in a given entering group who graduated within 150% of normal time to program completion.*

5. **According to the 2006 *County and City Extra-Annual Metro, City and County Data Book,* the percentage of high school students attending private schools in the region was higher in each parish than the national average.** The Louisiana average is higher than the U.S. average of 16.4%.

6. **High school graduation rates for the 2006-2007 school year range from a high of 80.4% (Destrehan High School) to a low of 56.6% (East St. John High School).** Graduation rates for those schools where data is currently available are presented in Table 43.

TABLE 43
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS AND NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND DESIGNATIONS
2006-2007
Source: AL Dept of Education; School Tree.org

School District	High School	Grades	# Enrolled	# Sr.'s	Grad Rate	Magnet School	NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress	Growth Label (2006)	Performance Label (2006)
St. Charles Parish	Destrehan H.S.	9-12	1,452	344	80.4%	No	Met AYP	Minimal academic growth	Two stars
St. Charles Parish	Hahnville H.S.	9-12	1,386	289	78.3%	No	Met AYP	School in decline	Two stars
St. James Parish	Lutcher H.S.	7-12	968	153	67.1%	No	Met AYP	Recognized academic growth	Two stars
St. James Parish	St. James H.S.	7-12	459	108	69.9%	No	Met AYP	Minimal academic growth	Two stars
St. John the Baptist Parish	East St. John H.S.	9-12	1,347	301	56.6%	No	Did not meet AYP	School in decline	Academically unacceptable
St. John the Baptist Parish	West St. John H.S.	8-12	249	48	78.8%	No	Met AYP	No Growth	One star

7. **Of the six public high schools in the three-parish region for which No Child Left Behind (NCLB) performance designations were provided, two have attained growth targets, three are in Academic Assistance, and one is in School Improvement status.** The Academic Assistance/School Improvement (AA/AI) designation is assigned to schools that do not meet growth targets for student achievement, attendance, and retention. Intervention to improve school performance includes scholastic audits and district assistance teams. Schools currently in Academic Assistance/School Improvement are identified by parish in Table 44. (Table 44 shows the distribution of high schools by parish.)

TABLE 44 : High School No Child Left Behind Performance Designations by Parish
Source: Louisiana Department of Education

Parish	School Name	NCLB Performance Designation
St. Charles	Destrehan H.S.	Not in AA/SI
St. Charles	Hahnville H.S.	Academic Assistance
St. James	Lutcher H.S.	Not in AA/SI
St. James	St. James H.S.	Academic Assistance
St. John the Baptist	East St. John H.S.	School Improvement 2
St. John the Baptist	West St. John H.S.	Academic Assistance

8. **Louisiana ranks among the lowest states in the nation regarding student performance.** According to the February 2007 U.S. Chamber of Commerce report *Leaders and Laggards: State Report Cards*, eighth-graders stand twelve percentage points below the national average in the percentage of students at or above the *proficient* level on the NAEP math exam. They also fail in the categories of "academic achievement of low-income and minority students," "return on investment," and "post-secondary and workforce readiness." Performance measures for public schools in the region are presented in Table 45.

TABLE 45: Public High School Performance Measures by School
Source: Louisiana Department of Education

		Grade 9 *i*LEAP Test Results		Graduation Exit Exam (GEE) Results			
District	School	% Basic Achievement and Above: English	% Basic Achievement and Above: Math	% Basic Achievement and Above: English	% Basic Achievement and Above: Math	% Basic Achievement and Above: Science	% Basic Achievement and Above: Social Studies
St. Charles Parish	Destrehan H.S.	66.6%	73.2%	63.2%	81.8%	65.8%	70.3%
St. Charles Parish	Hahnville H.S.	63.0%	66.9%	72.2%	79.6%	67.0%	75.3%
St. James Parish	Lutcher H.S.	71.1%	67.8%	67.2%	80.2%	68.6%	68.3%
St. James Parish	St. James H.S.	54.2%	71.9%	58.4%	88.6%	59.5%	66.2%
St. John the Baptist Parish	East St. John H.S.	44.5%	41.8%	45.6%	53.8%	36.5%	45.6%
St. John the Baptist Parish	West St. John H.S.	31.3%	31.3%	29.4%	37.2%	27.7%	40.4%
State of Louisiana		**60.1%**	**60.4%**	**64.4%**	**66.0%**	**53.8%**	**61.3%**

9. **As noted previously, local residents would like to see additional training programs to upgrade their skills.** 45.8% of residents in the region who are currently employed (approximately 17,900 individuals) and 78.1% of those not currently employed but interested in employment (roughly 7,000 individuals) are interested in receiving training/education to acquire new job skills, as outlined in Table 46.

   - The largest numbers of residents report a desire for *computer-general* training. This is followed by *any unspecified training* and *special trades training.*

TABLE 46: First Preference for Training Among the Region's Employed and Not-Employed-But-Interested-In-Work: Estimated Number of Residents, Spring 2008
Source: YA/WDG Household Survey, Spring 2008

Field	% of Employed	# of Employed	% of Not-employed	# of Not-employed	% of Total	Total
Computer-General	15.7%	2,817	15.2%	1,074	15.6%	3,891
Any/Open	13.4%	2,405	15.2%	1,074	13.9%	3,479
Special Trade	10.3%	1,855	13.0%	921	11.1%	2,776
Manufacturing-Skilled	10.0%	1,787	8.7%	614	9.6%	2,401
Medical-related (except nursing)	8.8%	1,581	10.9%	767	9.4%	2,348
Nursing	7.7%	1,374	4.3%	307	6.7%	1,681
Management	6.5%	1,168	1.1%	77	5.0%	1,245

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 46 *(continued)*: First Preference for Training Among the Region's Employed and Not-Employed-But-Interested-In-Work: Estimated Number of Residents, Spring 2008
Source: YA/WDG Household Survey, Spring 2008

Field	% of Employed	# of Employed	% of Not-employed	# of Not-employed	% of Total	Total
Office/Clerical	4.2%	756	5.4%	384	4.6%	1,140
Business	5.0%	893	1.1%	77	3.9%	970
Computer-Specialized	3.4%	618	3.3%	230	3.4%	848
Construction	1.9%	344	2.2%	153	2.0%	497
Transportation	1.9%	344	2.2%	153	2.0%	497
Auto Mechanic/Auto Body	1.1%	206	3.3%	230	1.7%	436
Food Preparation & Services	1.9%	344	1.1%	77	1.7%	421
Sales	0.4%	69	4.3%	307	1.5%	376
Electronics/Electrical	1.1%	206	1.1%	77	1.1%	283
Customer Service	0.4%	69	2.2%	153	0.9%	222
Education-related	0.4%	69	2.2%	153	0.9%	222
Childcare	0.8%	137	1.1%	77	0.9%	214
Financial Services	1.1%	206	0.0%	0	0.8%	206
Protective Services	1.1%	206	0.0%	0	0.8%	206
Real Estate	1.1%	206	0.0%	0	0.8%	206
Government Services/Military	0.8%	137	0.0%	0	0.5%	137
Cosmetology	0.0%	0	1.1%	77	0.3%	77
Leisure/Entertainment	0.0%	0	1.1%	77	0.3%	77
Agriculture	0.4%	69	0.0%	0	0.3%	69
Social Services	0.4%	69	0.0%	0	0.3%	69
Total	100%	17,935	100%	7,059	100%	24,994

Labor Cost

1. **On average, the salaries/wages for which not-employed residents are willing to work are roughly 48% lower than the River Region average.** Not-employed residents interested in employment would be willing to enter the workforce for an average wage/salary of $23,348 ($11.22/hr), less than the region's average annual earnings of $45,055 ($22.09/hr).
2. **Residents who consider themselves under-employed would be willing to accept a new position for an average annual wage/salary of $40,590 ($19.51/hr), still below the River Region average.** Notably, the under-employed residents have higher educational attainment levels for one-to-three-years of college, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees than the region averages for these post-secondary educational categories.
3. **Average annual employee earnings in the River Region are higher than both the Louisiana and U.S. average.** The region's overall 2005 average earnings per year per worker ($45,055), latest data available, were nearly 44% higher than the Louisiana average ($31,318), and 17% higher than the national average ($38,539). (See Exhibit D-7, Appendix D).

4. **Earnings for entry-level and experienced workers are in keeping with the region's well paying industrial base.**
   - Table 47 provides average and median earnings according to surveyed area employers as of April 2008.
   - Workforce Alliance's database shows the average wage within the petrochemical sector is $21.46, compared to $17.55 in general industry, and $19.40 among industrial contractors.
   - Workforce Alliance data shows that the industrial contractor sector experienced a 25% increase in average wages over the past five years, with particular wage growth for welders, pipefitters, millwrights, instrumentation technicians, electricians, and boilermakers.

TABLE 47: Annual Salaries of Surveyed Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008

Occupation	Responses	Average Starting Rate	Median Starting Rate
Architecture and Engineering			
Associate engineers (2-year degree)	1	$52,000	$52,000
Engineers	6	$61,250	$63,250
Engineers, electric and electronic	5	$69,700	$70,000
Engineers, industrial	3	$56,333	$55,000
Engineers, mechanical	3	$56,333	$55,000
Technicians (general)	7	$49,849	$50,000
Business and Financial			
Accountants	8	$44,025	$51,000
Financial analysts	3	$42,880	$37,400
Sales representatives	8	$39,990	$36,720
Computer and Mathematical			
Computer programmers	1	$20,800	$20,800
Computer security specialists	-	-	-
Computer software engineers	-	-	-
Computer systems analysts	-	-	-
Computer systems engineers/architects	-	-	-
Database administrators	3	$23,587	$24,960
Network and computer systems administrators	1	$60,000	$60,000
Network designers	-	-	-
Web administrators	1	$47,552	$47,552
Web developers	-	-	-
Construction and Extraction			
Brickmasons and blockmasons	-	-	-
Carpenters	4	$41,340	$39,520
Construction laborers	6	$24,825	$24,554
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	-	-	-
Electricians	7	$44,462	$43,264
Painters, construction and maintenance	2	$25,251	$25,251
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	-	-	-

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 47 (*continued*): Annual Salaries of Surveyed Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008

Occupation	Responses	Average Starting Rate	Median Starting Rate
Education			
Teachers, elementary	1	$42,679	$42,679
Teachers, secondary	1	$42,679	$42,679
Teachers, special education	1	$42,679	$42,679
Teachers, post-secondary	1	$42,000	$42,000
Teacher assistants	1	$38,051	$38,051
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical			
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	-	-	-
Diagnostic medical sonographers	-	-	-
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	1	$37,440	$37,440
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners, all other	-	-	-
Healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other	-	-	-
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	-	-	-
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	-	-	-
Medical records and health information technicians	1	$30,867	$30,867
Occupational therapists	-	-	-
Physical therapists	-	-	-
Physician assistants	-	-	-
Radiologic technologists and technicians	-	-	-
Registered nurses	1	$49,026	$49,026
Respiratory therapists	1	$36,546	$36,546
Healthcare Support			
Home health aides	-	-	-
Medical assistants	-	-	-
Nursing aides, technologists and technicians	-	-	-
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair			
Electrical and electronic repairers	7	$44,922	$44,803
Industrial machinery workers	6	$44,911	$46,322
Maintenance workers, machinery	15	$39,943	$38,168
Unskilled laborers (manufacturing, repair)	12	$25,991	$23,920
Life Sciences			
Chemists	4	$57,000	$62,500
Clinical data managers	-	-	-
Medical scientists	-	-	-
Management			
Computer and information systems managers	1	$75,000	$75,000
Engineering managers	2	$110,000	$110,000
Industrial production managers	2	$57,500	$57,500

TABLE CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

TABLE 47 *(continued)*: Annual Salaries Of Surveyed Employers
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008

Occupation	Responses	Average Starting Rate	Median Starting Rate
Office and Administrative Support			
Computer support specialists (tech support)	2	$36,608	$36,608
Customer service representatives	6	$22,892	$20,956
Production			
Assemblers and fabricators	1	$23,920	$23,920
Bindery workers	-	-	-
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, metal	1	$41,600	$41,600
Computer-controlled-machine-tool operators, plastic	-	-	-
Inspectors	2	$53,300	$53,300
Instrumentation technicians	4	$48,672	$48,962
Machinists	6	$44,422	$47,882
Prepress technicians and workers (electronic)	1	$26,000	$26,000
Production operators	7	$44,600	$47,923
Team assemblers	-	-	-
Testers	-	-	-
Welders	4	$46,270	$46,000
Transportation and Material Moving			
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor trailer	6	$28,427	$29,120

Business Climate and Operating Environment

1. **The labor-related operating environment in Louisiana is favorable for business.** A review of existing labor legislation reveals many advantages for employers. (Refer to Table 48).
   - There are no current statewide restrictions that are stronger than federal ones in terms of plant closings, ADA legislation, EEO standards, sexual harassment law, or mandated parental leave.
   - Louisiana is a right-to-work state, and has laws concerning employment-at-will, meaning that an employee is hired at will and that employment can be terminated at the will of either the employer or employee.

TABLE 48: Labor Legislation in Louisiana
Source: WDG Database

Labor Legislation	
Employment at will?	Yes
If yes, significant restrictions (from employers standpoint)	No
Restrictions on employee drug testing	Yes
Telephone monitoring restrictions for regulation of productivity (or customer service)	Yes: One-party consent
Plant Closing Law stricter than Federal?	No
ADA legislation stricter than Federal?	No
Ban on hiring replacement workers during a strike?	No
Striking workers entitled to unemployment insurance?	No
Relatively difficult for an employer to contest and win a workers' comp. claim?	No
Relatively difficult for an employer to contest and win an unemployment ins. claim?	No
Right to Work law in effect?	Yes
EEO hiring standards more restrictive than Federal?	No
Sexual harassment laws more restrictive than Federal?	No
Mandated parental leave legislation more generous than Federal?	No
Onerous provisions for wrongful discharge	No
Restrictions on applicant testing	No

2. **According to data published in 2007, Louisiana workers' compensation insurance rates are higher than the U.S. average.** In 2007, average workers' compensation costs were 4.9% higher than the national average, according to the annual analysis of workers' compensation costs by *Actuarial & Technical Solutions* of Ronkonkoma, New York. According to Actuarial & Technical Solutions, Louisiana ranked 27th among 45 states evaluated in 2007 (with 45 being the most expensive). In Table 49, the index indicates the percentage above or below the U.S. average for workers' compensation rates.

TABLE 49: Workers' Compensation Comparative Costs, 2007* (Index U.S. Average=1)**
Source: Actuarial & Technical Solutions

State	Index	Rank	State	Index	Rank	State	Index	Rank
Arizona	0.489	1	New Mexico	0.852	16	Illinois	1.097	31
Indiana	0.501	2	Colorado	0.869	17	Oklahoma	1.102	32
Utah	0.547	3	South Carolina	0.886	18	Tennessee	1.114	33
Oregon	0.555	4	Nevada	0.893	19	Missouri	1.141	34
Arkansas	0.577	5	Georgia	0.898	20	Florida	1.141	35
Virginia	0.601	6	Mississippi	0.898	20	New Jersey	1.153	36
Massachusetts	0.672	7	Nebraska	0.959	22	Connecticut	1.197	37
South Dakota	0.742	8	Rhode Island	0.961	23	Hawaii	1.224	38
Maryland	0.749	9	Pennsylvania	1.010	24	Texas	1.299	39
North Carolina	0.754	10	Minnesota	1.015	25	Montana	1.314	40
Idaho	0.783	11	Alabama	1.046	26	New York	1.387	41
Wisconsin	0.810	12	**Louisiana**	**1.049**	**27**	Delaware	1.635	42
Iowa	0.825	13	Kentucky	1.073	27	Alaska	1.754	43
Michigan	0.825	14	Maine	1.080	29	California	1.759	44
Kansas	0.842	15	New Hampshire	1.088	30	Vermont	1.818	45

** Ranked from lowest to highest ** Five states are self-insured and not reported in this index*

3. **Between 1990 and 2007, there have been twenty-two certification elections in River Parishes Region, according to the National Labor Relations Board.** (Refer to Exhibit D-17 in Appendix D).
   - Of the twenty-two certification elections, unions won approximately 45.5% of the votes. The Teamsters were involved in three of the elections.
   - Notably, there have been no union elections in the region since August 2004.

Quality of Life

1. **The quality of life in the study area is commensurate with its population size and density.** Cultural offerings in the region are good for a community of its size, and outdoor recreational opportunities are plentiful.
   - The nearby New Orleans area has thirty-three golf courses, including daily fee, municipal, and private courses. Land in recreational use exceeds 113,000 acres, and includes five federal parklands (Bayou Sauvage NWR, Big Branch Marsh NWR, Bogue Chitto NWR, Breton NWR, and Delta NWR) and seven state parks. Alongside the on-land recreation, the New Orleans area also has over 1.76 million acres of water recreational areas, which include lakes and rivers.
   - Other recreational opportunities exist in Baton Rouge.
   - The area has extraordinary fishing and hunting opportunities.
2. **Employers report a satisfactory to good quality of life.** Quality-of-life factors receiving a good rating include public and private education (K-12). Factors receiving a slightly-higher-than-satisfactory to satisfactory rating include availability of affordable homes,

availability of affordable homes for transferred/relocated personnel, availability of childcare services, healthcare services, safety from crime, and personal income tax. (Refer to Table 50).

- The only factor receiving a slightly-less-than-satisfactory rating is local traffic/road congestion.

TABLE 50: Quality-of-Life Ratings
Source: WDG Employer Survey, Spring 2008 (1=Poor; 5=Excellent)

Factor	Average	Median
Public education (K-12)	3.4	4.0
Private education (K-12)	3.8	4.0
Availability of affordable homes	3.0	3.0
Availability of homes for transferred or relocation personnel	3.1	3.0
Availability of childcare services	3.2	3.0
Healthcare services	3.0	3.0
Safety from crime	3.3	3.0
Traffic/road congestion	2.8	3.0
Personal income tax	3.0	3.0

3. **Housing at multiple price points is available in the region, and it is slightly higher than the state average.** The Claritas-estimated 2007 median region home value ($124,163) is roughly 18% higher than the state average ($105,319).
   - Claritas data shows that the region's median home value in 2007 was only 72% of the national median ($172,914).
   - Current Multiple Listing Service real estate offerings indicate good housing availability priced below $250,000. (Refer to Table 51 and Exhibit D-13 in Appendix D.)

TABLE 51: Available Homes by Price Level, February 2008
Source: Realtor.com

Home Value	3-Parish Region	
	#	%
Under $100,000	39	6.4%
$100,000-$149,999	94	15.4%
$150,000-$199,999	191	31.4%
$200,000-$249,999	110	18.1%
$250,000-$299,999	66	10.8%
$300,000-$349,999	29	4.8%
$350,000-$399,999	42	6.9%
$400,000-$449,999	11	1.8%
$450,000-$499,999	14	2.3%
$500,000 and over	13	2.1%
Total:	609	100%

4. **The property-crime rate is lower in each of the three parishes than the Louisiana and U.S. averages; however, the violent-crime rate in St. Charles Parish is higher than the Louisiana average, and the violent-crime rate for St. James Parish is significantly higher than Louisiana and U.S. averages.** According to the 2003 FBI crime reports (the latest data available), the property-crime rate for the River Parishes region (2,835 crimes per 100,000 residents) was lower than Louisiana and U.S. averages (4,350 and 3,517 crimes per 100,000 residents, respectively). The region's violent-crime rate (526 crimes per 100,000 residents) was lower than the Louisiana average, but higher than the U.S. average (646 and 466 crimes per 100,000 residents, respectively).

   - According to the 2003 FBI crime reports, the property-crime rate for St. Charles Parish (3,170 crimes per 100,000 residents) was lower than Louisiana and U.S. averages (4,350 and 3,588 crimes per 100,000 residents, respectively). The St. Charles violent-crime rate (565 crimes per 100,000 residents) was lower than the Louisiana average, but higher than the U.S. average (646 and 475 crimes per 100,000 residents, respectively). (Refer to Exhibit B-13 in Appendix B.)
   - St. James Parish also has a property-crime rate (3,105 crimes per 100,000 residents) lower than the Louisiana and U.S. averages (4,350 and 3,588 per 100,000 residents, respectively). However, the violent-crime rate for St. James Parish (1,135 crimes per 100,000 residents) is considerably higher than that of the state and nation (646 and 475 crimes per 100,000 residents, respectively). Important to note, the violent crime rate has decreased significantly since 2002 (2,472 crimes per 100,000 residents).
   - St. John the Baptist Parish has the lowest crime rates of the three parishes. In 2003, the property-crime rate for St. John the Baptist Parish (2,340 crimes per 100,000 residents) was lower than the Louisiana rate and the U.S. rate (4,350 and 3,588 crimes per 100,000 residents). In addition, the violent-crime rate for St. John the Baptist Parish (199 crimes per 100,000 residents) was lower than both the Louisiana and U.S. rates (646 and 475 crimes per 100,000 residents, respectively).

5. **The area hosts three hospitals containing approximately 247 beds combined; however, the quantity of hospital beds per capita is lower than both the state and national rates.** Physician services, with 65 physicians per 100,000 residents, are significantly lower than the Louisiana and national averages (203 and 209 physicians per 100,000 residents). (Refer to Exhibit B-13 in Appendix B.) According to the *Places Rated Almanac* published in 2007, the New Orleans MSA is underserved in the primary care areas of family and general practitioners, and is also underserved in the area of osteopathic specialists. Notably, the MSA is very well served in the areas of internal medicine, pediatrics, and medical, surgical, and psychiatric specialists.